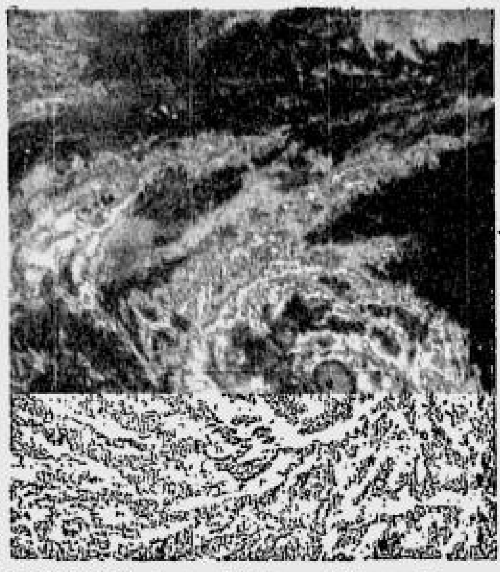

SOURCE: NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

SATELLITE photo of Typhoon "Yoyong" (international code name Nanmadol).

Business / B1

5 Japan IT firms to locate to RP

2bU! / E1

6 student designers share 11 tips on room redesign

News / A6

10 soldiers killed in clash with NPA in Bulacan

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Papasang buo ang pork barrel. Naloko ba tayo?

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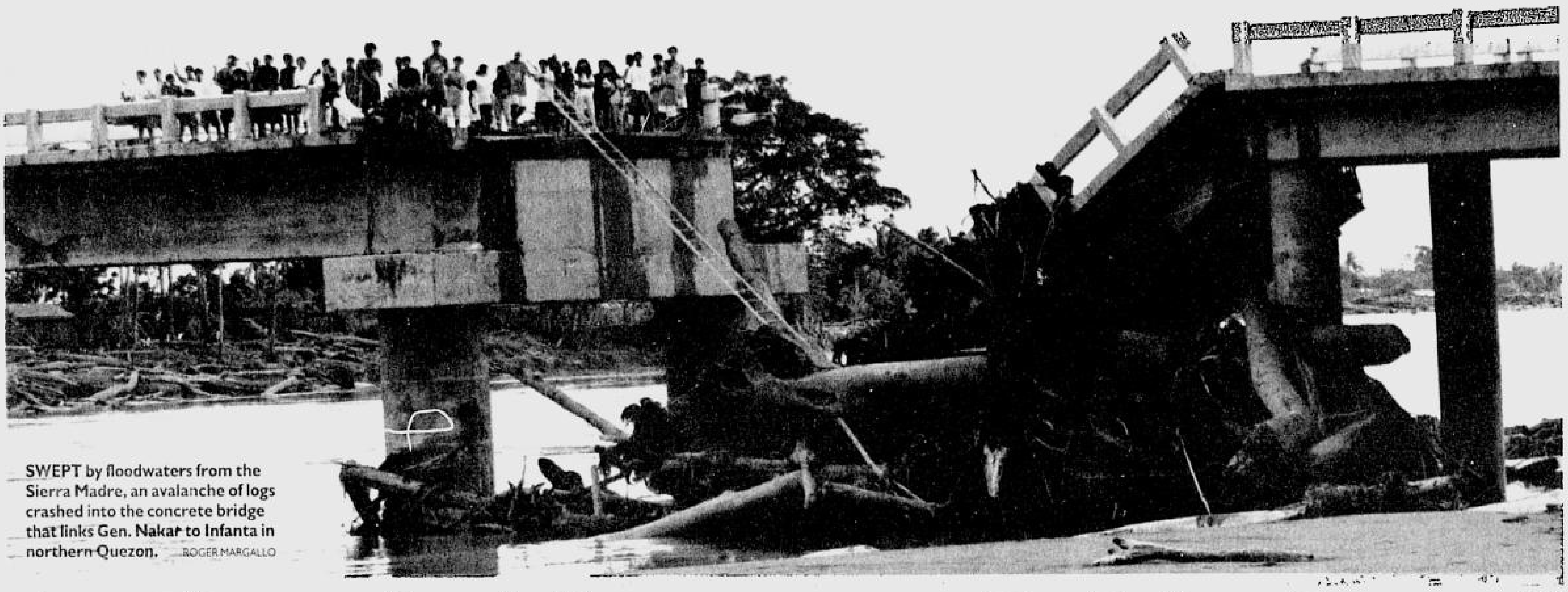
Pinoy denied US residency as wife used to be male

LOS ANGELES—A lawsuit filed against the US federal immigration service alleges the agency discriminated against a Filipino couple when it denied the husband legal residency because his wife had a sex change operation nearly 24 years ago.

Jiffy Javenella, 27, entered the country as a legal resident in 2001 as Donita Ganzon's fi-

PINOY/ A22



SWEPT by floodwaters from the Sierra Madre, an avalanche of logs crashed into the concrete bridge that links Gen. Nakar to Infanta in northern Quezon. ROGER MARGALLO

'Winnie' leaves 341 dead

Husband, wife survive clinging to banana stalk

By Luige A. del Puerto, Volt Contreras and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TWENTY-YEAR-OLD Dante Runes and his wife Florence, nine months pregnant, were the lucky ones. They survived a murderous flood that swept them two towns away as they clung to a water jug and a banana trunk until a boatman rescued them.

Others didn't make it.

Officials said more than 300 people were killed—many of them drowned and some others electrocuted or crushed by landslides—in the wake of Tropical Depression "Winnie" that lashed several provinces of Luzon and Metro Manila with awesome deadliness from Monday until yesterday.

The Runeses, swept from their home in Rodriguez, Rizal, on Monday night and rescued later in Marikina City, survived two hours in the raging Marikina River on pure grit and prayers.

"My body was getting numb ... I was ready to give up," Dante told the INQUIRER.

"I told him, 'No, you cannot give up. You must not give up ... for us,'" said Florence, who is due to deliver anytime.

At midnight, the couple and 14-year-old neighbor J.R. Mancero were fished out by a Marikina resident tending to a carabao who had heard their screams from the river. He maneuvered a banca and brought them ashore.

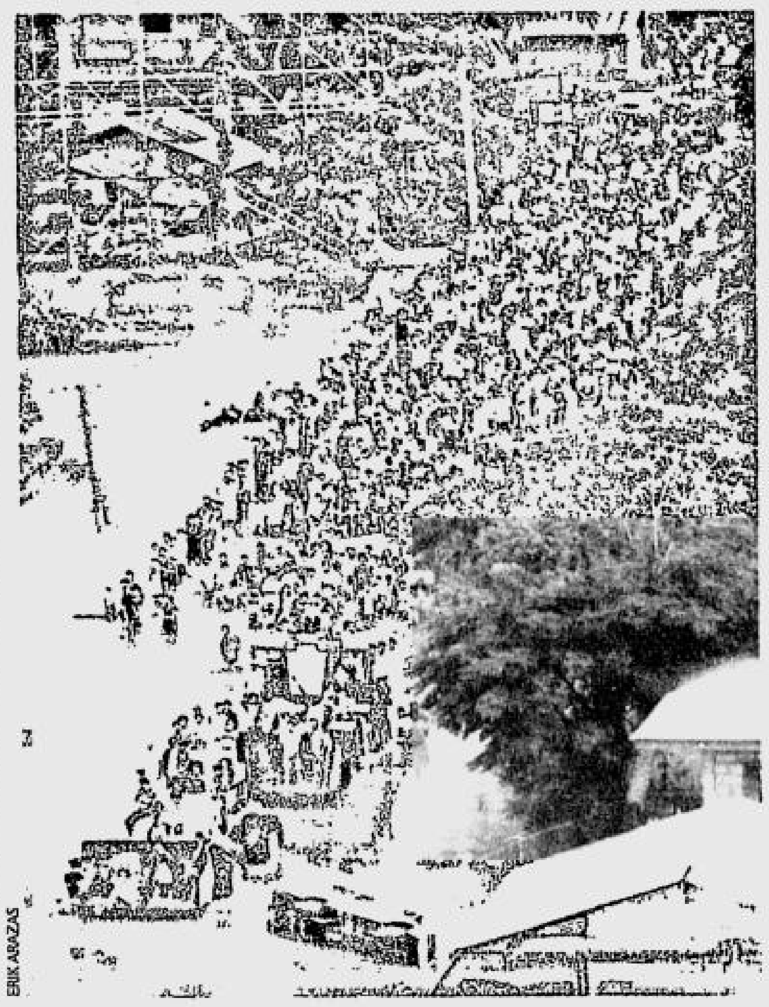
"We don't know who he is. We forgot to ask his name," Runes said.

Winnie brought nothing but death and misery elsewhere, es-

WINNIE/ A12

ERIK ARAZAS

STRANDED passengers wait to be rescued as early as 5 a.m. on Tuesday on the Castillano Bridge in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija. Help came from an Army amphibian team and Gov. Tomas Joson.



ERIK ARAZAS

A PROCESSION of Winnie's victims streams toward safer ground from stranded buses and flooded houses in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija.

A WASTELAND of fallen trees messes up the landscape on the way to Infanta. ROGER MARGALLO

Pagasa needs, hopes for rain gauge radars

By Norman Bordadora

THE MISERY brought by Tropical Depression Winnie underlines once again the need to forecast with some degree of accuracy how much rain would fall in a particular area so that people could protect themselves against tragedy, officials said yesterday.

For that purpose, they said, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration would need several rain gauge radars, each capable of forecasting the amount of rainfall over a 20-km radius.

With Pagasa's P2.7 billion modernization program still in

PAGASA/ A12

Typhoon alert: 'Yoyong' to hit all of Luzon

By Fe Zamora

STOCK up on food, blankets, baby food, medicines—and pray it will change course.

Said to be stronger than "Unding," "Violeta" and "Winnie," Typhoon "Yoyong," with projected center winds of 120 km per hour, is expected to hit land tomorrow.

"This is rather strong, so we are calling on the public to monitor, and if the direction [of the typhoon] does not change, please evacuate to safer areas," Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said during a briefing at the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).

"*Mas matindi ito* (This is the strongest) and this is already the fourth [typhoon], so we can expect the waters to rise," Cruz added. He said he expected typhoon signal No. 3 to be raised over affected areas, mainly in Luzon.

Cruz said Yoyong would "hit a wider area, almost the entire Lu-

TYPHOON/ A17

Graft raps set vs Abadia for P11-M wealth

By Armand N. Nocum

GEN. Lisandro Abadia, former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, will be charged with graft for his P11,262,876 in alleged unexplained wealth that he accumulated during his one-year term as AFP head.

In a supplemental resolution, Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo yesterday directed Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio to file charges of "unexplained wealth" and to initiate forfeiture proceedings against Abadia in the Sandiganbayan.

A net worth analysis made by the Office of the Ombudsman showed that Abadia should have accumulated assets of only P2.6 million from 1987 to 1993 based on his salary, other income and sale of property.

With the huge increase in his "claimed income in 1992 and 1993, there exists probable cause that (Abadia) made untruthful statements in his (statement of assets and liabilities) for 1992.

GRAFT RAPS / A21

Let's get this straight, gays dare guys

By Norman Bordadora

LET'S get this straight—it's a beauty pageant for straight-looking gay men?

Trulili, maderaka (Yes, mother)!

LET'S/ A21

NO WAY MISTER! KAHIT MISS KA NA NGAYON!

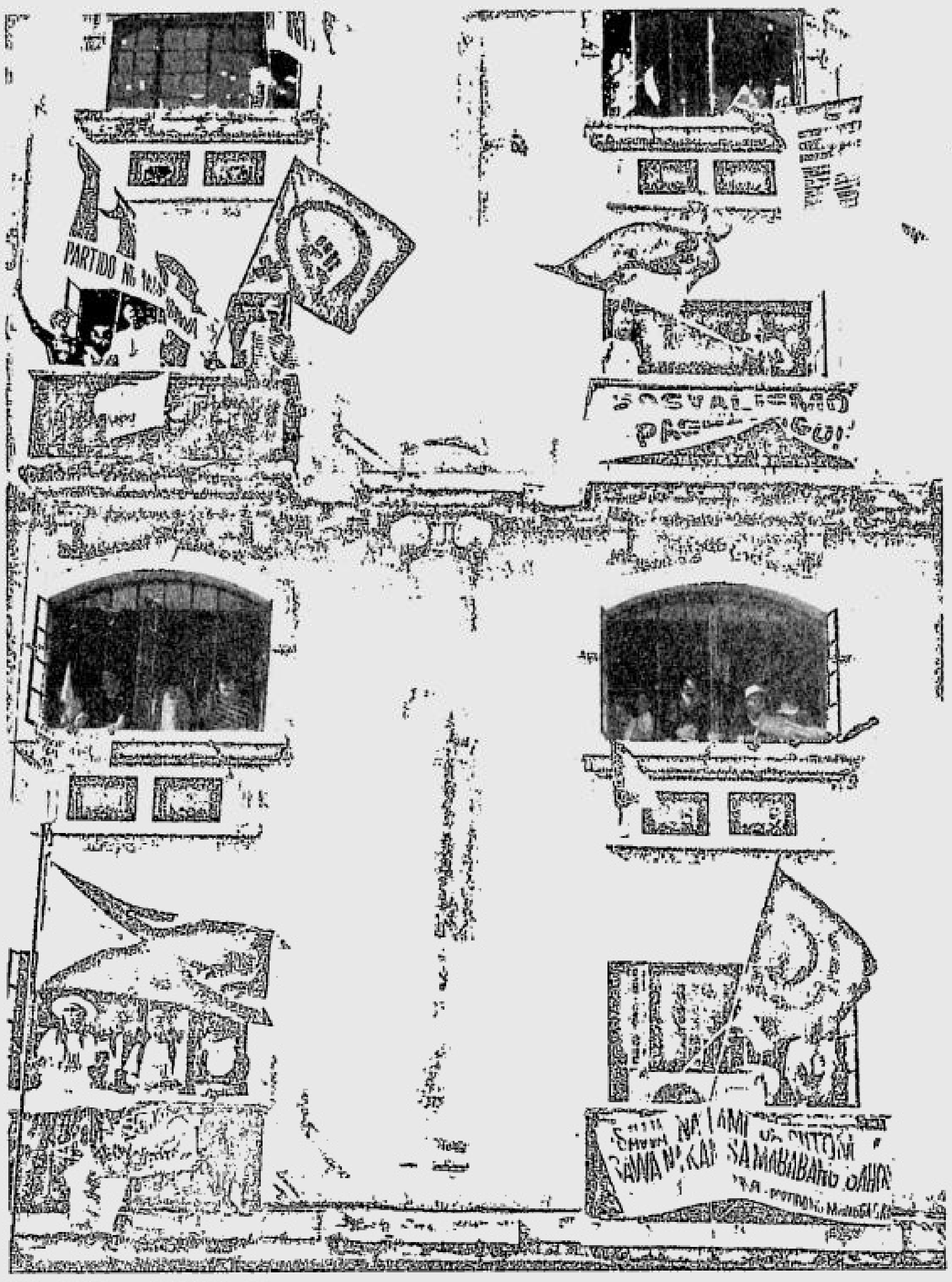
WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming more frequent over Eastern sectios of Luzon and Visayas. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/01/04

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains



OCCUPIED ZONE

Militant groups demanding the resignation of Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas unfurl banners from the balconies of the labor department's Intramuros head office which they stormed and occupied for about three hours yesterday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Asean, Japan team up vs terror

By Connie E. Fernandez

VIENTIANE, Laos—The Association of Southeast Asian Nations yesterday agreed to work with Japan in the fight against international terrorism.

In a declaration for cooperation signed yesterday, the last day of the 10th Asean leaders' summit here, Asean and Japan said they recognized that terrorism remained a global security concern and posed a threat to the peace and stability of the region.

The declaration laid out areas of cooperation between Asean and Japan that include exchange of intelligence information.

In other summit developments, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she has suggested to Burmese Prime Minister Soe Win that the jailed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi be allowed to participate in a national convention next February to ratify a new constitution.

The President met with Soe Win at the Asean summit here late Monday at the Burmese general's request.

Pressure for Suu Kyi

"In the spirit of goodwill, I stated that as an Asean neighbor and representative for Asean as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, it would be best for Aung San Suu Kyi and the [opposition] National League for Democracy to be represented in the political process," the President said.

The President said she also conveyed to Soe Win a message from United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan saying that "another visit of the UN Special Envoy should be arranged."

Suu Kyi's third confinement since 1988 has been extended for a year, according to officials in Rangoon and her NLD party.

While some Asean members already have an existing collaboration with Japan covering security, intelligence and law enforcement, Asean and Japan said they wanted to expand this to fight international terrorism.

"The participants are called upon to designate their respective agency to coordinate with law enforcement agencies, authorities dealing with countering terrorist financing and other concerned government agencies," the antiterrorism declaration signed yesterday said.

The 10-member Asean is composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Asean members pledged to implement the provisions of the declaration, but in accordance with their own laws and "specific circumstances."

These include the strengthening of information and law enforcement cooperation, including extradition and mutual assistance in criminal matters to bring terrorists to justice.

Asean and Japan said they would continue to support development projects aimed at reducing poverty and socio-economic disparity and injustice, as well as promote the elevation of living standards, particularly in underdeveloped areas.

They also vowed to ensure the early conclusion and implementation of all counterterrorism conventions and protocols and full compliance of relevant UN resolutions on international terrorism.

Fronts for terror groups

The parties also pledged to come up with measures to counter and prevent the financing of terrorists and terrorist organizations.

Asean and Japan will also make sure that terrorists will not use charitable organizations and other groups as a cover for their activities.

Immigration controls would be strengthened to prevent the movement of terrorists, and the parties will provide assistance on border and immigration control problems.

Asean and Japan also promised to work together to enhance national transport security, including aviation and maritime security.

They will also reinforce capacity-building efforts through training and education; consultations between officials, analysts and field operators; deployment of experts, and holding of seminars, conferences and joint projects.

They also pledged to develop multilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism in international forums. *With a report from AFP*

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CIVILIANS MOVE IN

Defense revamp is on

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE REVAMP of the defense department took effect yesterday after President Macapagal-Arroyo named four new undersecretaries and one assistant secretary.

Presidential Communications Adviser Silvestre Afable III announced the appointment of Francisco del Rosario as new defense undersecretary for finance replacing Feliciano Gacis, Jose Santos as undersecretary for defense acquisition replacing Cesar Bello, Rafael Antonio Santos as undersecretary for operations in place of Edgardo Batenga and Rodel Cruz as undersecretary for legal and priority concerns.

Also appointed was Othelo Carag as new assistant secretary replacing Leticia Gloria who is set to retire early next year.

Special team

"This revamp reinforces the civilian character of the defense department and will speed up much needed systemic and structural improvements to cut out corruption and improve frontline services to our soldiers," the President said.

Del Rosario and Jose Santos are bankers while Rafael Antonio Santos and Cruz are lawyers.

The three new undersecretaries will be part of a "special team" that would implement the Philippine Defense Reform Program and the Armed Forces of the Philippines Capability Upgrade Program, according to the Office of Communications Director headed by Afable.

Jose Santos will sit as chair of the reconstituted Bids and Awards Committee of the Department of National Defense.

The revamp came five days after the President told INQUIRER editors and executives that she ordered a revamp of the undersecretaries and assistant secretaries of the Department of National Defense to stamp out corruption and implement reforms in the department which oversees a scandal-prone military.

Veteran banker

In a statement, the OCD said the President instructed Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz to replace the retiring undersecretaries with civilian executives.

According to the OCD, Del Rosario had extensive experience in banking and finance having been chair and chief operating officer of the Development Bank of the Philippines, chief finance officer of San Miguel Properties Inc. He also managed the De La Salle University Graduate School and was a trustee of the ABS-CBN Foundation.

Jose Santos was described as a veteran banker who recently retired as executive vice president and head of the Commercial Banking Group of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. He was also a part-time faculty member of the Ateneo de Manila Graduate School and has completed an advanced management program at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

Seasoned lawyer

Rafael Santos, according to the OCD, is a seasoned lawyer who ranked 8th in his class at the University of the Philippines College of Law.

Cruz, on the other hand, was previously an undersecretary at the Office of the President and chief of staff in the Office of the Chief Presidential Legal Counsel. Cruz graduated cum laude from UP where he also ranked 8th in his law class.

After the DND, the President wants a revamp at the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association (AFPSLAI).

"All efforts must be done to preserve the integrity of the AFP and restore public faith in the defense and military establishments," Ms Arroyo was quoted as saying. The OCD said the Commander in Chief gave the instructions to Cruz and AFP chief of staff Lt. Gen. Efren Abu.

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Getting Robot was easier for colonel

By Christine O. Avendaño

GIVEN the grilling he underwent yesterday, this Army colonel probably thought it was much easier facing down Abu Sayyaf bandit Commander Robot, which he did in 2003, than facing the members of the Commission on Appointments.

But in the end, the members of the CA national defense committee, impressed by his achievements, endorsed the promotion to full colonel of Aminkadra Undug, along with 29 others, in a hearing yesterday.

The bemedalled Undug, who was the principal officer behind the capture of Ghalib Andang or Commander Robot in Jolo last year, was in the CA hot seat for more than 40 minutes.

His promotion was opposed by Panamao Mayor Bassar Abdurajak who told the CA about a visit the colonel paid to his municipality on election day on May 10.

It turned out Undug's brother was running against Abdurajak. The brother lost the election but he filed an election protest against Abdurajak who was reelected.

But committee members headed by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile became irked at Abdujarak for failing to appear at the hearing and sending his lawyer instead.

For his part, Undug said he flew to Panamao by helicopter on orders of his superior in Task Force Comet to investigate a land mine explosion and go after the perpetrators.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson asked Undug if his superior knew his brother was running against Abdujarak in Panamao.

"He knew it," replied Undug.

"It's bad enough you were there, its worse that (your brother) lost," Lacson said in jest.

Enrile asked Undug if he went to the polling precinct in the municipality and the latter replied in the negative.

Undug said the helicopter landed far from the polling place but he acknowledged chancing upon the election officer when he talked to the Philippine Marine contingent that was on election duty.

Enrile asked if the Marines were under his superior's jurisdiction and Undug replied in the affirmative, saying they were part of Task Force Comet.

Reyes faces CA bypass

IT looks like Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes will be the first Cabinet member appointed to the second Arroyo administration to be bypassed by the congressional Commission on Appointments.

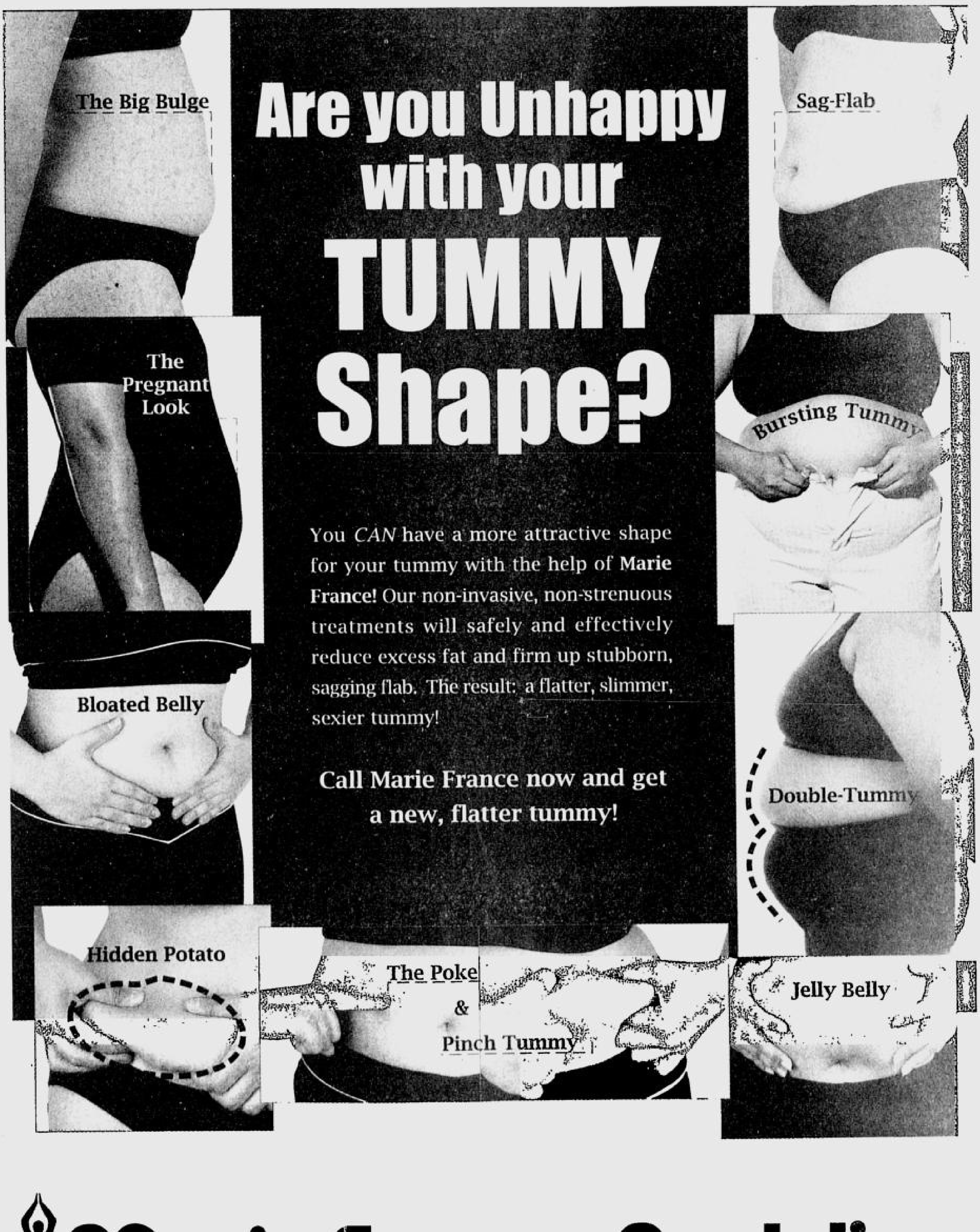
Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who heads the CA interior and local governments committee, yesterday said the possibility of Reyes being by-passed before the Christmas recess was "very great" as the committee might need to hold two or even more hearings to accommodate the questions that committee members want to ask the former general.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said he "seriously [doubted]" that the CA could report out Reyes' appointment to the plenary before the Christmas break.

Drilon said Reyes' case would require more hearings because of the issues raised in last week's hearing in which Reyes was grilled on Armed Forces finances during his stint as AFP chief and on his wife's numerous travels.

If Reyes is indeed by-passed, he would have to be re-appointed by the President, said Biazon.

Biazon said that CA's schedule this week was already full, with hearings set on the appointments of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Education Secretary Florencio Abad. *Christine Avendaño*



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HOSTAGE IN IRAQ

Talks still ongoing for Tarongoy freedom

By TJ Burgonio

FOREIGN affairs officials yesterday squelched speculations that negotiations with the captors of Robert Tarongoy in Iraq had bogged down, saying the team working for his release had lost contact with only one of the intermediaries.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said Team Iraq, headed by Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, has maintained contact with most of the go-betweens to the group holding Tarongoy, a Filipino accountant who had managed to sneak into Baghdad to work despite a ban by the Philippine government on its nationals going there.

"Because there are many contacts that we are reaching out to, it's expected that one of them will not be continuously returning the messages of Team Iraq in Baghdad," Asuque told reporters.

"What we really want to stress is that Team Iraq continues to communicate with all its intermediaries," he said.

Seguis, in an interview on CNN on Sunday, had said the intermediaries "have stopped talking to us since four days ago," setting off speculations that the negotiations had stalled.

He also appealed to the abductors not to harm the 31-year-old Tarongoy, as he assured them the team was "willing to resume talking to them or to their intermediary anytime."

Asuque took pains to explain Seguis' statement, saying, "What Undersecretary Seguis said is that we're all reaching out to all the intermediaries that will be able to bring our appeal for the release of Robert Tarongoy to his abductors."

"It's only one [intermediary that we lost contact with] ... Remember Undersecretary Seguis is a former Philippine ambassador to Baghdad and he has established links with many people there," Asuque said.

As of Monday night, the intermediaries had not contacted Team Iraq, a source said. Weeks ago, the team also reportedly lost contact with the intermediaries, but officials were quick to deny this.

The kidnappers had reportedly demanded $10 million for Tarongoy's freedom. The government has ruled out paying any ransom, but said. the demand should be addressed to Tarongoy's employer, the Saudi Arabian Trading and Constructing Co. (Satco).

Asuque said Team Iraq was doubling its efforts to obtain the release of Tarongoy, who is spending his 30th day in captivity today.

"It is a difficult process, no doubt about it. But all the more Team Iraq and the crisis management team will double [their] efforts to seek [his] safe release," Asuque said.

"We're doing everything on the ground. We have the right people there. We have the highest official in Baghdad. We couple this with prayer like what we did with Angelito Nayan," he said.

Nayan was seized by Muslim insurgents in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Oct. 28. He was freed on Nov. 23 along with two UN co-workers after nearly one month in captivity.

Gunmen stormed Satco's compound in the upscale Mansour district of Baghdad on Nov. 1 and seized Tarongoy, American Roy Hallum, a Nepalese and three Iraqis. The Nepalese and three Iraqis were later released.

Palace won't release Customs list of big-time smugglers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it would not bare the contents of the list of big-time smugglers in the country which a leading business group wants to publicize as an added deterrent against this illegal activity.

In a phone interview with reporters, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that the list of big-time smugglers drawn up by Customs Commissioner George Jereos would be treated "with confidence."

'Order of battle'

Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza, however, questioned Malacañang's decision to make the list of big-time smugglers a closely guarded secret.

"If the individuals have been under surveillance for some time and the BOC has the goods on them, I think the government can safely reveal their names as suspects in its anti-smuggling campaign," Arranza said.

Based on a Malacañang statement, Jereos had promised to submit in his "order of battle" the names of alleged smugglers, together with the evidence the Bureau of Customs has compiled against the suspects mostly engaged in the illicit trade of oil, rice, sugar, motor vehicles, vegetables, alcohol and illegal drugs.

Public disclosure

Arranza said that businessmen had hoped that the public disclosure of the the top smugglers in the country would shame these individuals and discourage other smugglers from continuing to engage in this trade.

Although the list has been due since the middle of November, Bunye said he could not confirm whether Jereos has already submitted the list which the Senate has likewise been eagerly awaiting.

Battle against smuggling

"We know that the President has been waiting for that for sometime. That's a welcome development if that list has been actually submitted," Bunye said.

The President has released P100 million to bankroll government's battle against smuggling and reactivate the Anti-Smuggling Task Force with Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes as head to boost the campaign against smuggling which has drained the government of billions of pesos in annual revenues.

Correction

IN THE NOV. 28 issue, an Across the Nation story on Page A19—"C. de oro electric firm taps power of the sun"—misstated the ownership of Cepalco, the country's third largest electric utility outside Metro Manila. Cepalco is owned by the Abaya family—not the Aboitiz family.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph. Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

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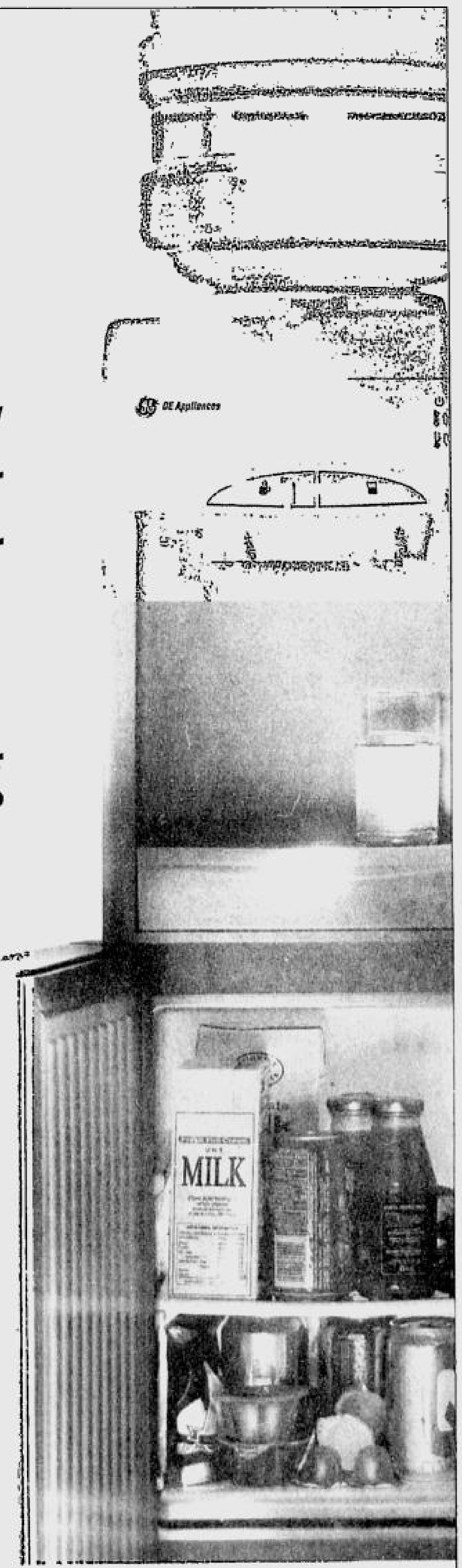

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NO FANFARE

Ex-hostage reporting for work at DFA today

By TJ Burgonio

NAYAN

FORMER hostage Angelito Nayan will be reporting for work today at the Department of Foreign Affairs six days after his return to the country from almost a month in captivity in the hands of a shadowy Muslim group in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Yesterday also marked the end of the six-month official leave Nayan took from the DFA in order to go to Afghanistan to help the United Nations conduct the elections there.

Nayan's return to work will be without any fanfare, however, and without any assurance that he would be getting his old job back in the Office of American Affairs (OAA).

Even so, the 34-year-old diplomat opted to face the press on his first day at work. After merely reading a short statement on his arrival in Manila on Thursday night and skirting media interviews since then, Nayan asked for a press conference at 2 p.m. today, DFA officials said.

"His leave ends today, so he's back to work," said DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque yesterday, noting that Nayan had not asked for an extension of his leave. "That's why he's having his press conference tomorrow [today]."

Except for the tall Christmas tree in the lobby of the DFA building, Nayan won't find anything different when he returns to the office. No red carpet, no banner heralding his return and no banquet will await him.

"I think his batch mates have already given him a welcome," said Asuque, by way of explaining why the DFA decided against giving him a party. "His neighbors, as you have reported, have given him a welcome."

Nayan's classmates in the Foreign Service Institute had eschewed a party for their friend. Instead, they held a thanksgiving Mass for him on Friday.

DFA officials were also unsure if Nayan would get back his old job as principal assistant in the OAA, the post he held when he went on leave in May.

"It's up to the personnel department to identify where he will be assigned," Asuque said.

For formality, Nayan will sign his name in the DFA logbook and inform the personnel and administrative services departments that "he's back to work," Asuque added.

Nayan, who holds a master's degree in International Relations, is a foreign service officer IV. He signed up with the UN Development Program to help oversee the landmark presidential elections in Afghanistan early last month, which was won by interim President Hamid Karzai.

Toward the end of his stint as officer-in-charge of the electoral monitoring team of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, he, together with two other UN workers, was seized at gunpoint in Kabul on Oct. 28.

The three hostages were released by their kidnappers, an unknown group calling itself Army of Muslims, on Nov. 23 following an international outcry and an intense manhunt by American, British and Afghan forces.

Despite his abduction and the ensuing tedious negotiations for his release, DFA officials have ruled out banning diplomats from joining international missions in strife-torn countries.

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10 soldiers dead in clash with NPA

By Tonette T. Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Ten Philippine Army soldiers were killed while six others were wounded in an encounter Tuesday with New People's Army rebels in San Rafael, Bulacan, the public information chief of the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command reported.

The soldiers belonged to the 56th Infantry Battalion, Lt. Col. Preme Monta, speaking to the INQUIRER by phone from Nolcom at Camp Aquino, Tarlac City, said.

This was the first known clash with communist rebels this year where the military in Central and Northern Luzon suffered a high death toll.

Monta said the soldiers' platoon, comprised of 19 troopers led by Lt. Ben Puyao, broke off from a relief distribution mission in the wake of Tropical Depression Winnie to check reports on the presence of NPA rebels in Barangay Pasong Bakal, also in San Rafael.

"They were overpowered," said Monta, adding that the rebels numbered about 80 and were led by a Ka Delfin of the NPA Bulacan eastern command.

The clash, which broke out at 3:30 p.m., resulted in a running gun battle that lasted 45 minutes. Recovery of the soldiers' bodies lasted till past 9 p.m.

Citing the report of battalion commander Lt. Col. Noel Clement, Monta said the government forces also lost 18 firearms in the fight.

Three soldiers survived unscathed after they were reinforced by arriving troops. "They fought to the end," Monta said, citing Clement's report.

Monta declined to identify the fatalities and the wounded until their families had been notified.

"The NPAs took advantage of the bad weather. The soldiers were there to carry out a civic mission," Monta said.

Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, Nolcom chief, ordered government forces to pursue the rebels.

GMA approves of military investigation

By G. Cabacungan Jr.

MS ARROYO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo approves of the way the Armed Forces of the Philippines handled the investigation of corruption in the military amid claims of a cover-up in the probe of top officers.

"The President is satisfied with the way the AFP leadership is handling the investigation of all the controversies that are hounding the military organization," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Bunye elaborated further on the President's view on the military corruption probe in a phone interview.

"What is important is there is an internal cleansing process. The chief of the AFP is on top of this and the President supports this kind of action by the AFP," Bunye said.

Bunye assured that the ongoing AFP reforms would "purge its rank of misfits, further professionalize the command, and restore the trust and respect it deserve from the public."

In giving her vote of approval of the AFP's on-going investigation of its top officers following the expose on the lavish lifestyle of AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the President has merely firmed up her initial position that the military corruption should be handled within the military system and that there was no need for an independent body to look into the military's shenanigans.

The President made the statement in the face of reports that the statement of assets and liabilities of SAL of top military officers (that serve as the basis for determining appropriate lifestyle standards) have been switched or altered.

The AFP is already investigating Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual for allegedly switching the SALs of top military officers at the office of the military's ethics watchdog.

Witness vs gay officer says he fears for his life

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE MILITARY recruit who claimed last week that Army Maj. Ferdinand Ramos solicited sexual favors from him and fellow recruits yesterday went to the Senate to seek protection from Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Biazon told reporters that the recruit, whom he did not name, was afraid for his life and sought his protection.

But the senator said he instead endorsed the recruit to the deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel or J-1 because he had "no facility to provide (the latter) protection."

"I'm told that he will be provided security or taken under the Witness Protection Program of the AFP," he said in a news conference.

Asked whether the recruit had received death threats following his exposé against Ramos that was aired on national television last week, Biazon said no.

He said that the recruit told him he was afraid that he might be harmed.

The recruit went to the Senate accompanied by his father. But reporters were asked by Biazon's staff not to interview him for security reasons.

The military has already restricted Ramos, chief of the Army's Civil-Military operations at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac, to his quarters and placed him under investigation.

This came after the recruit complained that Ramos had solicited sexual favors from him and other recruits. He provided a video copy showing the act and this was played on national television last week.

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GMA may call special session over tax bills

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is inclined to call a special session of Congress to ensure the passage of four tax measures deemed necessary to avert a credit downgrade and a burgeoning budget deficit.

"I may have to call a special session," Ms Arroyo told INQUIRER editors and executives on Thursday.

But the Senate majority would prefer that marathon sessions were held in lieu of a special session in order to pass the tax measures Malacañang wants approved before the Christmas break.

Congress is set to go on Yuletide break from Dec. 17 to Jan. 10 next year.

The decision to hold marathon sessions was reached by the 14-member Senate majority in caucus yesterday, according to Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

Pangilinan said the majority wants to hold another caucus with the nine-member minority bloc today on the proposal under which the Senate would hold morning and afternoon sessions beginning today and from Monday to Thursday.

But this early, Pangilinan said some senators had expressed concerns about holding morning sessions because this would affect committee hearings.

"As an alternative, maybe we could hold afternoon sessions that would last up to 9 or 10 p.m.," Pangilinan said in an interview.

Ms Arroyo had said it was important for Congress to pass at least four of the eight revenue measures she had proposed to Congress before the year is over. She said the rest of the tax measures could wait until next year.

The President said the government could raise P80 billion from the package of eight new taxes to address the budget deficit and prevent its financial problems from becoming a full-blown fiscal crisis.

Congress leaders had promised to approve four tax measures this year—the excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol, the lateral attrition bill, the franchise tax on telecommunication companies, and the additional value-added tax on oil companies and professionals.

Anticipating the passage of the tax bills, Ms Arroyo declared a few weeks ago that the country was getting out of the fiscal crisis.

Senate leaders had asked the President to call Congress to a special session but only to pass the 2005 national budget. The government is operating on an P804-billion budget that was reenacted from 2003.

It's a breeze for DOT chief

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRACTICALLY, it's in the bag.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano is expected to be formally confirmed by the 25-member Commission on Appointments (CA) when it convenes today for a plenary session.

At yesterday's confirmation hearing, the CA's committee on tourism and economic development practically gave its nod to Durano's designation.

Durano is expected to subsequently relinquish his seat in the House of Representatives when he becomes a full-fledged member of the Cabinet of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Even Sen. Richard Gordon, after lecturing Durano on the dynamics of the tourism business, moved to have the Cebu solon confirmed.

"While we are all here, I would just like to point out that the secretary-designate has all the qualifications in terms of intelligence, youth—and I was once the youngest delegate to the Constitutional convention so that it should not be an issue—and therefore I see a lot of promise in him," said Gordon.

Surprisingly, nobody among the CA members present at the committee hearing grilled Durano on his dual position. He took the helm of the tourism department without resigning from the lower chamber.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had raised this constitutional infraction, saying a member of Congress was barred from serving in the executive branch.

Apparently, Durano hesitated to resign from the House of Representatives so he could go back to the lower chamber should the CA fail to confirm his ad interim appointment.

Durano's designation, Pimentel said, had been largely seen as payback for providing a one million vote margin for Ms Arroyo in the last presidential election.

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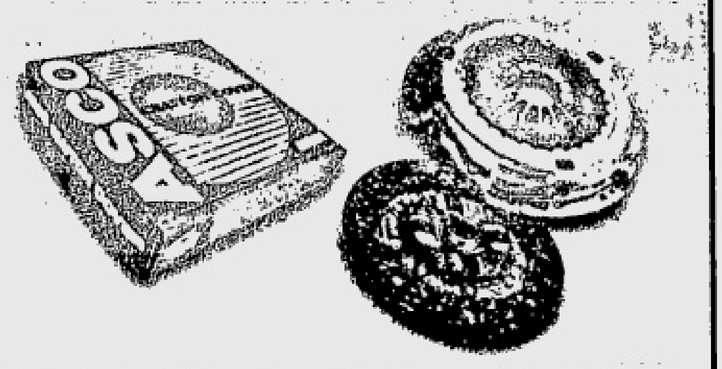

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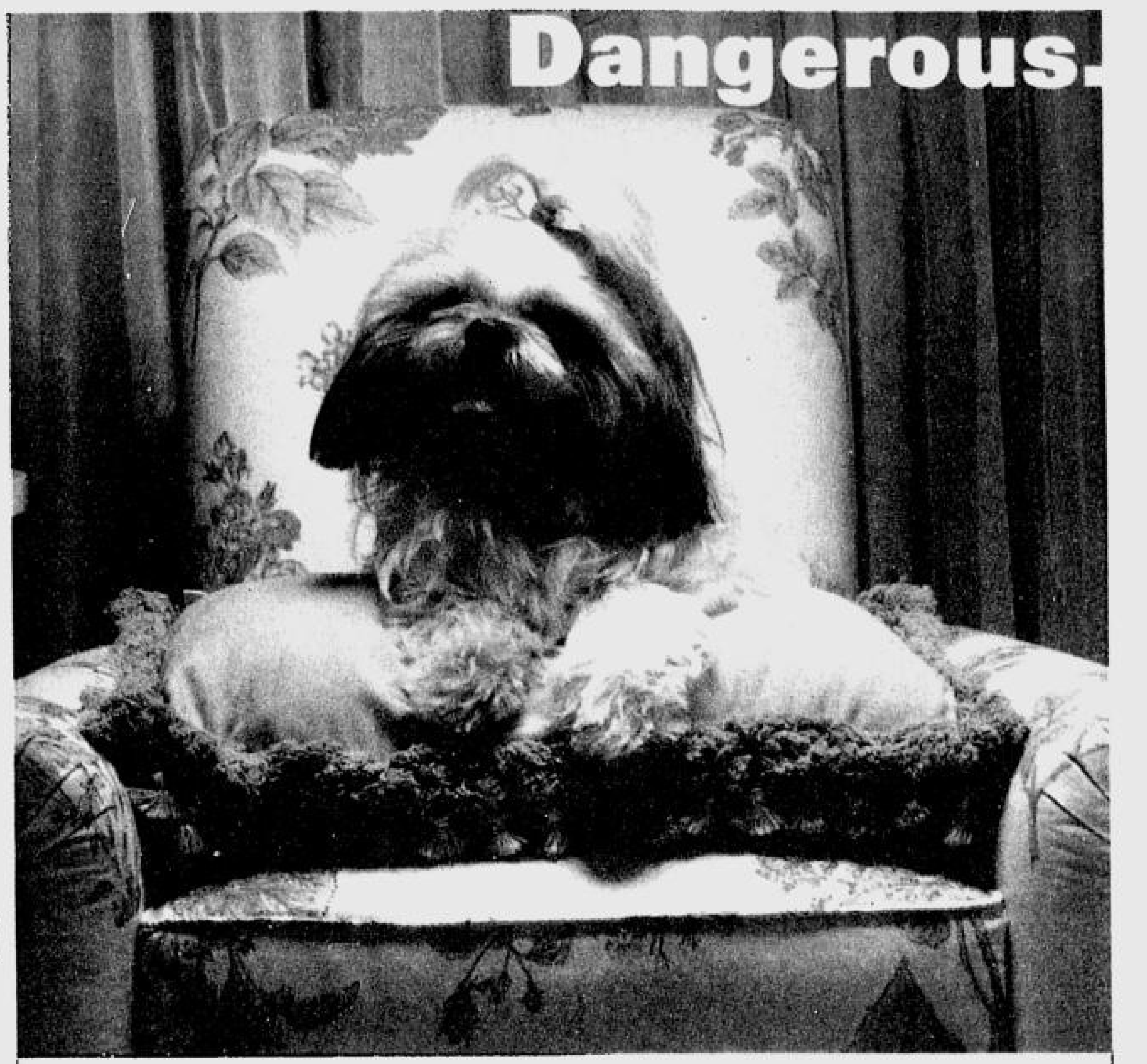

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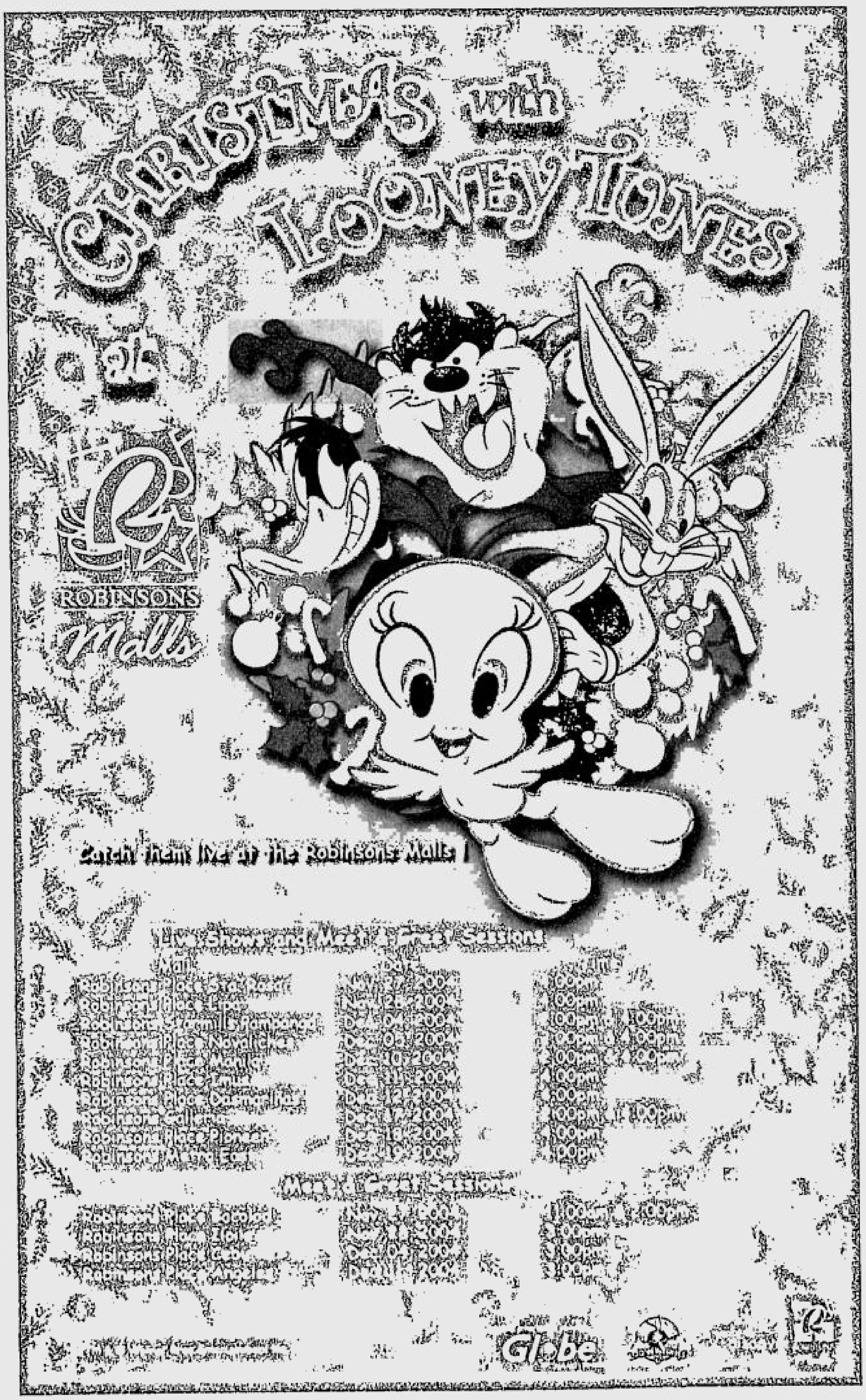
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Asian parliament endorsed

By Carlito Pablo

ISLAMABAD—House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. succeeded in getting the 5th General Assembly of the 40-nation Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace to unanimously endorse his idea of an Asian Parliament.

"We believe fervently that the vision we in the AAPP share of an Asia without dividing lines is no longer just a distant dream," De Venecia said in his keynote speech before the assembly.

De Venecia emerged from the meeting flashing the two-thumbs-up sign to members of the Philippine delegation.

"This decision is of great strategic importance because the 40 member-parliaments of the AAPP account for 60 percent of the world's population," said the Speaker, as he emphasized the need for an Asia that was integrated socially, economically and politically.

It was a sweet victory for De Venecia who has been campaigning for an Asia-wide parliament even as he has yet to make a significant breakthrough in his pet dream of getting the Philippines to adopt a parliamentary system.

Heads of delegations to the AAPP assembly approved in an executive session a study prepared by the Philippine delegation proposing the conversion of the AAPP into the Asian Parliamentary Assembly within five years.

"This is a great moment for Asian parliaments and for Asian democracy," said Sen. Mushehid Sayed Hussain, secretary general of Pakistan's ruling party and one of those who strongly supported the proposal.

DE VENECIA

The feasibility study, circulated by the Philippines two weeks ahead of the conference, envisions an integrated Asia patterned after the European model. The process of European integration began 55 years ago.

According to the study, the "time is ripe for the Asian states to move beyond their informal and occasional associations."

It said the Asian Parliamentary Assembly "should stress the social and cultural dimension of the integration process... and should seek to establish a foundation for universal human values such as respect for human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law."

The APA will increase cooperation on transnational problems such as terrorism, communicable diseases, narcotic drugs and cross-border crime, the study said.

It will also help facilitate consultation on common problems and enable Asia to deal "equally with other continental blocs on trade and economic-cultural cooperation."

De Venecia, who first proposed the creation of an Asian Parliament at the AAPP Executive Council meeting in Chongqing in 2002 and reiterated it at the Manila AAPP Assembly last year, said Asian integration would be done "step by step and not by one quantum leap."

He urged all delegations to "seize the day in moving toward one Asia integrated socially, economically and politically."

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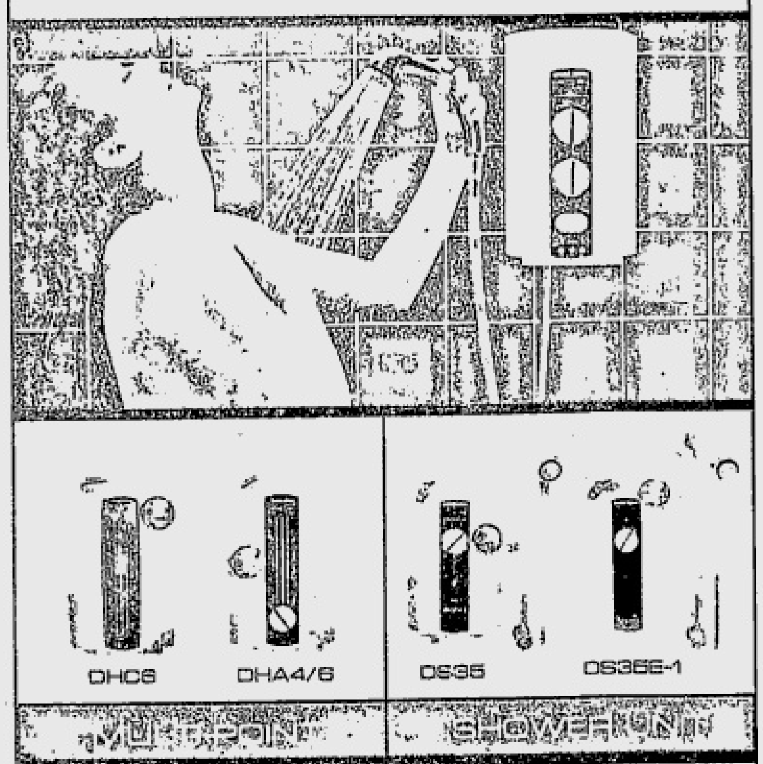

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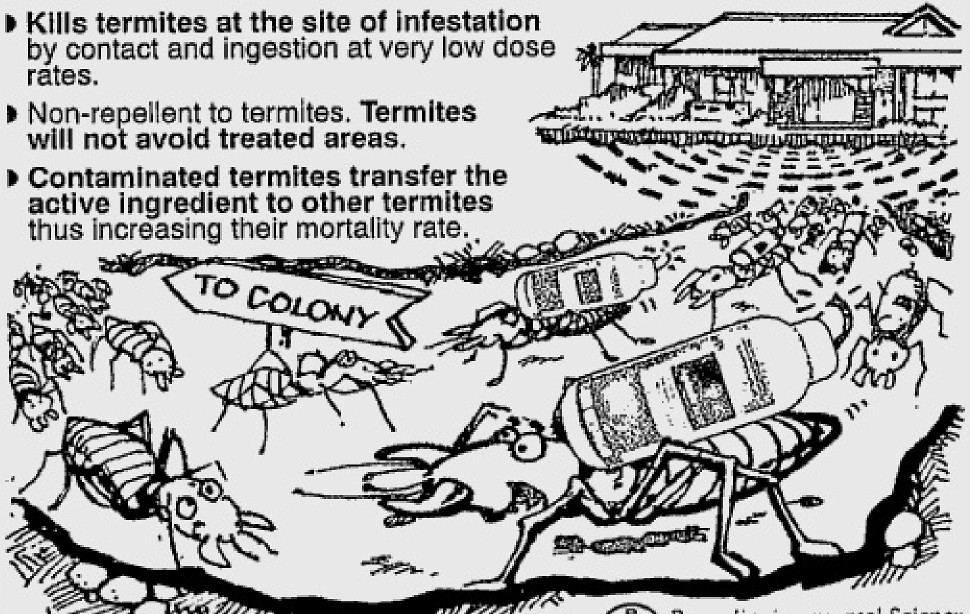

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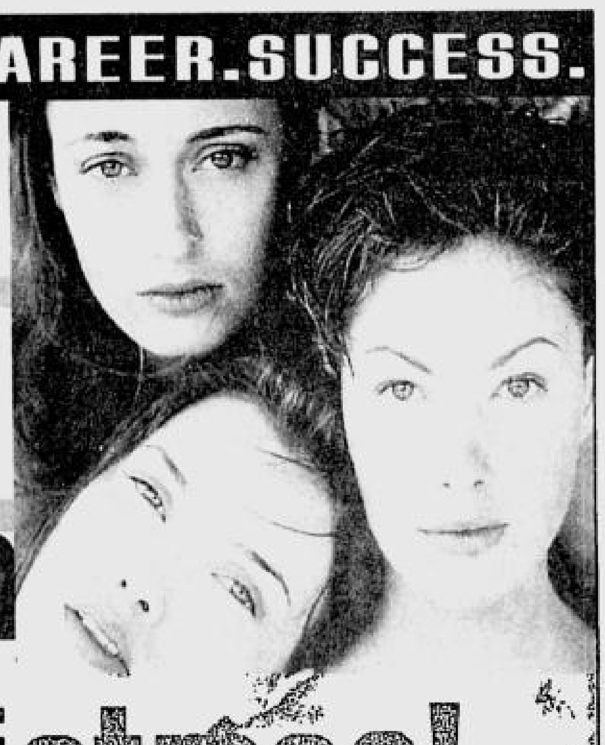

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PNP CHIEF 'GOING NUTS'

Why are they killing journalists?

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHO'S killing journalists and why?

His guess may be only as good as yours. The country's top investigator is admittedly at a loss on why media practitioners are getting murdered.

"I'm going nuts, I'm angry on why these killings are happening," Philippine National Police chief Edgar Aglipay yesterday told reporters.

Since he assumed office on Aug. 23, Aglipay said at least seven media men had been killed, bringing to 15 the number of slain journalists this year alone.

"Even if we solved five of the seven killings, what's more important is for the killings to stop," he said in Filipino, shortly after a dialogue with the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines that was also attended by representatives from the judiciary, the Senate and the National Bureau of Investigation.

The police claimed they had solved the killings of Herson Hinolan, Gene Boyd Lumawag, Eldy Sablas, Jose Luis Villanueva and Christopher Misajon with the filing of criminal cases against the suspects.

Since 1986, a total of 60 media practitioners have been killed, the latest incident being the murder of Freeman-Cebu photographer Allan Dizon on Nov. 27.

Of the 60 victims, the PNP said 34 were radio broadcasters; 23, print journalists, and two, television reporters.

Even if police claimed they had practically solved 31 of these cases, the NUJP seemed anything but impressed.

In the dialogue, NUJP president Salvacion Espina-Varona told Aglipay that the most effective answer to the murders was still the arrest and conviction of killers.

"The entire solution should also include good investigation, good prosecution, and the conviction of killers of journalists," she told reporters. "There should be no shortcuts."

Hoping to appease restive journalists, Aglipay offered to teach those in distress a thing or two about counter-surveillance, a proposal the NUJP said it was open to.

The PNP also suggested the creation of a reward system that would encourage people to share information that could lead to the arrest of media killers.

It also proposed to set up a special protection program for witnesses and a special court that would focus on media killings.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

1st Week of Advent

1st Reading:	Is 25:6-10
Gospel:	Mt 15:29-37

Jesus went to the shore of Lake Galilee, and then went up into the hills where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the dumb, the blind, the lame, the crippled, and many with other infirmities. The people carried them to the feet of Jesus, and he healed them. All were astonished when they saw the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the crippled healed and the blind able to see; so they glorified the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "I am filled with compassion for these people; they have already followed me for three days and now have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away fasting, or they may faint on the way." His disciples said to him, "And where shall we find enough bread in this wilderness to feed such a crowd?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They answered, "Seven, and a few small fish."

So Jesus ordered the people to sit on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the small fish and gave thanks to God. He broke them and gave them to his disciples, who distributed them to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied, and the leftover broken pieces filled seven wicker baskets.

Commentary

THERE'S this account of the feeding of 4,000, and in the previous chapter there's an account of the feeding of 5,000. Were there two separate events, or have we two separate accounts of a single event? This question has been asked times out of number.

St Augustine thought there must have been two separate events, "Wherever anything is done by the Lord, and the accounts of it by any two Evangelists seem irreconcilable, we may understand them as two distinct occurrences, of which one is related by one Evangelist, and one by another."

But a modern scholar (McKenzie), noting that the same doublet is found in the earliest gospel (Mk 6:34-44 and 8:1-10), and that in all cases the accounts have Eucharistic overtones, writes, "That this story should have given rise to variant forms so early may indicate that it was very often told; and this in turn suggests that the connection of the story with the Eucharistic rite was present from the beginning."

It's easy to imagine this story being told over and over again to a great variety of congregations from the earliest times, as they celebrated the Eucharist. They are our ancestors in the faith. Each time they heard the story (in the version we are reading today) they heard also that the disciples came "bringing the lame, the crippled, the blind, the dumb and many others." Those early Mass-goers could identify themselves with that. To disabilities previously mentioned Matthew adds a category, "the lame." God's ragged family: that's who we are.

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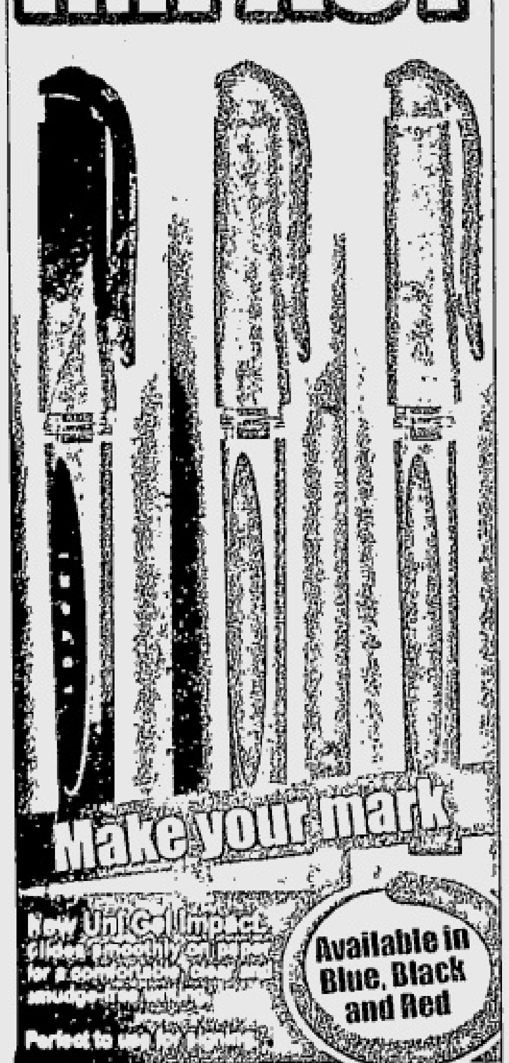

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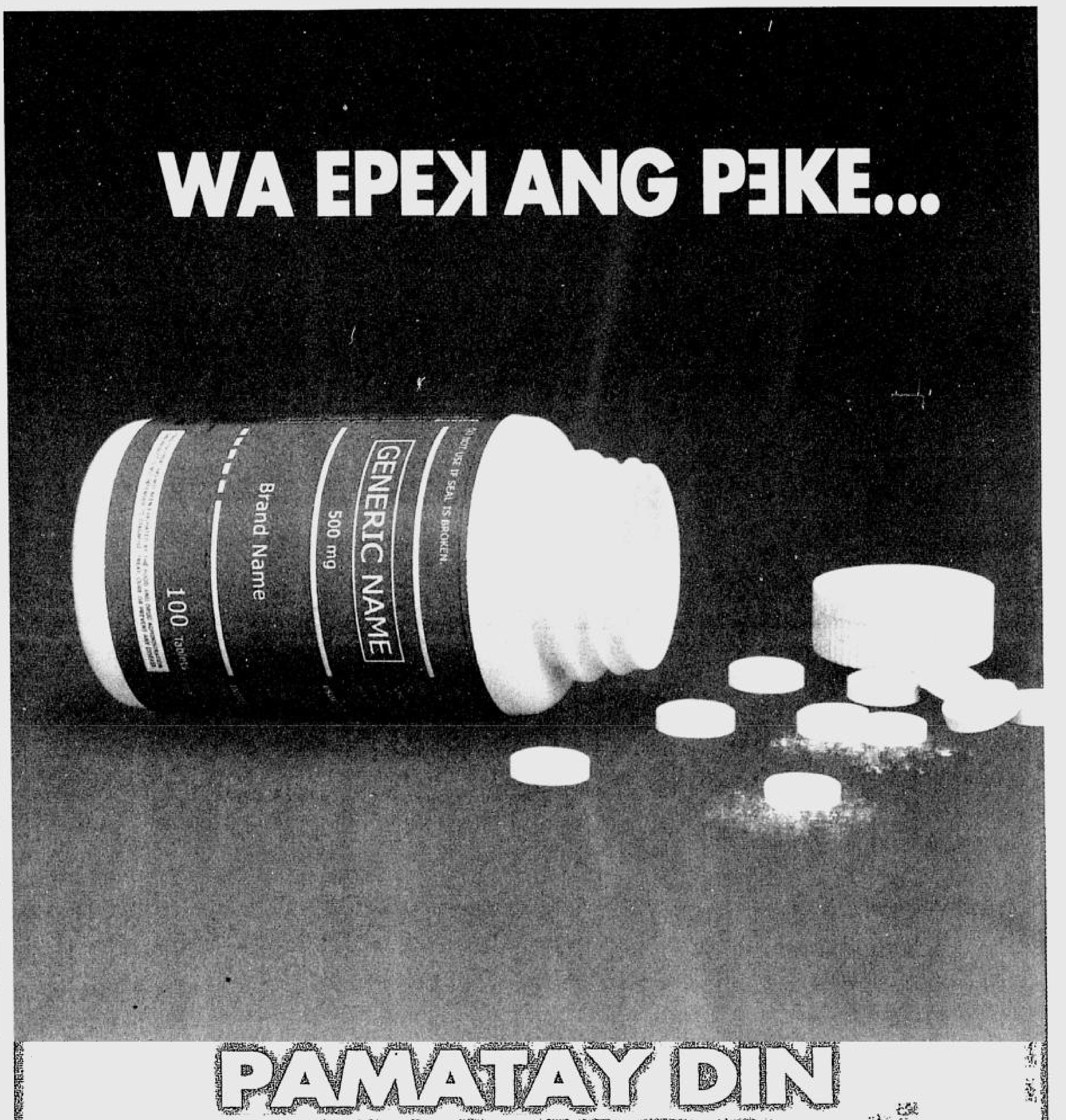

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

New Ukraine elections seen likely

KIEV—Some form of new election in Ukraine appeared increasingly likely as the Supreme Court and parliament both sit on Tuesday to try to resolve a weeklong crisis triggered by a disputed presidential poll.

Outgoing President Leonid Kuchma signaled a shift in position on Monday, backing a new election to resolve a standoff that threatens to tear the nation apart.

With mass protests paralyzing government, Finance Minister Mykola Azarov said the banking system was strong enough to weather the chaos but the central bank warned there was a run on bank deposits. It pledged to meet increased cash demands.

Supporters of challenger Viktor Yushchenko again began gathering in the center of the capital Kiev, white after heavy overnight snowfalls. Their early morning numbers appeared smaller than in previous days, but the barricades blocking the main thoroughfare remained intact.

While the Supreme Court meets for a second day to consider electoral fraud allegations by Yushchenko, parliament will discuss the state of the economy and demands in eastern regions for autonomy.

Buoyed by international pressure, tens of thousands of Yushchenko's supporters surged through central Kiev last week to back his Supreme Court challenge against authorities declaring Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich winner of the Nov. 21 ballot.

Angry demonstrators in eastern Ukraine, the prime minister's home base which sees its future linked to Russia, denounced efforts to overturn the official result.

Kuchma's comments marked a concession to Yushchenko, whom he had previously criticized for whipping up mass street protests with charges that he was cheated of the presidency by fraud.

"If we really want to preserve peace and consensus and build this just democratic society, of which we speak so much but have failed to carry out in a legal way, let us have new elections," Kuchma told regional leaders, with Yanukovich present.

Kuchma's statement followed telephone talks with US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, whose country holds the rotating European Union presidency.

The United States and the EU have both criticized the conduct of the Nov. 21 poll, while Russia backed Yanukovich in the campaign against Yushchenko, who wants to move gradually closer to western Europe.

Powell said Washington hoped Ukraine would remain intact.

But Washington did not endorse Kuchma's call for new elections.

The Supreme Court of more than 20 judges began sitting on Monday to hear Yanukovich's case. It gave his team and Election Commission officials more time to examine documents.

The opposition also hopes to use the parliamentary session on Tuesday to press for the resignation of Yanukovich's government and the general prosecutor.

"Tomorrow we may become witnesses to a political decision by (parliament) and a judicial ruling by the Supreme Court providing all we need to end the political crisis," Yushchenko told a crowd massed in Kiev's Independence Square on Monday. *Reuters*

Al-Qaida's No. 2 vows more attacks vs US

DUBAI—Al-Qaida's deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahri said in a videotape broadcast on Monday al-Qaida would continue to attack the United States until Washington changed its policies towards the Muslim world.

"We are a nation of patience and we will continue fighting you (United States) until the last hour," Zawahri said in the excerpts of the tape aired on Arab television Al Jazeera.

"Our final advice to America, although I know they will not heed it: You must choose between two methods in dealing with Muslims. Cooperate with them with respect and based on mutual interests or deal with them as free loot, robbed land and violated sanctity," he said.

Egyptian-born Zawahri is Osama bin Laden's right hand man and has been pictured travelling with the al-Qaida leader through Afghanistan. He is on the FBI's list of its 22 "most wanted terrorists."

The latest video, in which Zawahri was wearing a white turban and sitting with an automatic rifle next to him, appeared to have been taped before the US presidential polls because he said it did not matter to al-Qaida whether Americans chose US President George W. Bush or Democratic challenger John Kerry.

Zawahri mentioned in passing Iraq's polls which are due to be held in January.

"As for the American elections, the two candidates are competing for Israel's favor—that is, competing for the crime against the Muslim nation in Palestine which has lasted for 87 years to continue."

"This proves that there is no solution with America except to force it to submit to what is right through force," he said.

A US intelligence official said the US intelligence community would conduct a technical analysis of the tape.

Al Jazeera last month aired a videotape from Bin Laden warning of possible new Sept. 11-style attacks. He said in a full Internet broadcast of the video that Bush had dragged the United States into a quagmire in Iraq and warned of retaliation for Iraqi deaths.

It appeared to be bin Laden's first direct threat against the United States over deaths in Iraq.

Fighters loyal to Washington's top foe in Iraq, Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, recently pledged allegiance to the al Qaida leader. Zarqawi's group has claimed the bloodiest attacks in Iraq and hostage beheadings. *Reuters*

UN panel proposes ways to deal with terror threats

UNITED NATIONS—In a highly awaited report spawned by the deep divide over the war in Iraq, an international panel makes over 100 recommendations on how to deal with global threats in the 21st century including the use of preemptive strikes, according to highlights obtained by The Associated Press.

The report by the 16-member panel, to be released on Thursday, also proposes how to expand the UN Security Council to reflect modern realities.

It identifies the threats facing the world today—including internal and external wars, poverty and social upheavals, failed states, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and organized crime—and proposes ways to deal with them. It also defines terrorism, something the 191-member UN General Assembly has tried unsuccessfully to do for years, an official close to the panel said on condition of anonymity.

Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed the panel a year ago in response to the deep split over the US-led war on Iraq which the Security Council refused to authorize. The UN announcement said the debate had "shaken the foundations of collective security and undermined confidence in the possibility of collective responses to our common problems and challenges."

Whether the panel's wide-ranging recommendations attract substantial support remains to be seen. Its members include former prime ministers of Norway and Russia, former foreign ministers of Australia and China, and former US national security adviser Brent Scowcroft.

Annan said he plans to spend his remaining two years as secretary general focusing on reform of the United Nations and pushing the goals adopted by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, including cutting in half the number of people living in dire poverty and ensuring that every child has an education, both by 2015.

The panel, chaired by former Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, could not decide on a single proposal to reform the Security Council so it proposed two options to expand it from the current 15 members to 24 members. Neither would add any new veto-wielding members.

At least two-thirds of the UN member states must approve any reform of the Security Council, which would require changing the UN Charter. Also, there can be no veto by any of the five permanent council members—the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France.

One proposal by the panel would add six new permanent members—two from Asia, two from Africa, one from the Americas and one from Europe—as well as three nonpermanent members elected for two-year terms. *AP*

Kofi Annan's son linked to oil-for-food scandal

ANNAN

UNITED NATIONS—Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "very disappointed and surprised" that his son had continued to receive payments until this February from a firm that had a contract with Iraq's oil-for-food program, the subject of numerous corruption investigations.

Annan told reporters Monday that he had been working on the understanding that payments to his son, Kojo Annan, from the Swiss-based firm Cotecna Inspection S.A. stopped in 1998 "and I had not expected that the relationship continued."

But on Friday, UN spokesperson Fred Eckhard said Kojo Annan's lawyer had informed the independent panel appointed by the secretary general to investigate allegations of corruption in the oil-for-food program that the younger Annan continued to receive monthly payments through February 2004.

The disclosure was the latest embarrassment for Annan and the United Nations over the humanitarian program that was instituted in December 1996 to help Iraqis cope with sanctions imposed after Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Naturally, I have warm, family relations with my son, but he is in a different field," Annan said Monday. "He is an independent business man. He is a grown man, and I don't get involved with his activities and he doesn't get involved in mine."

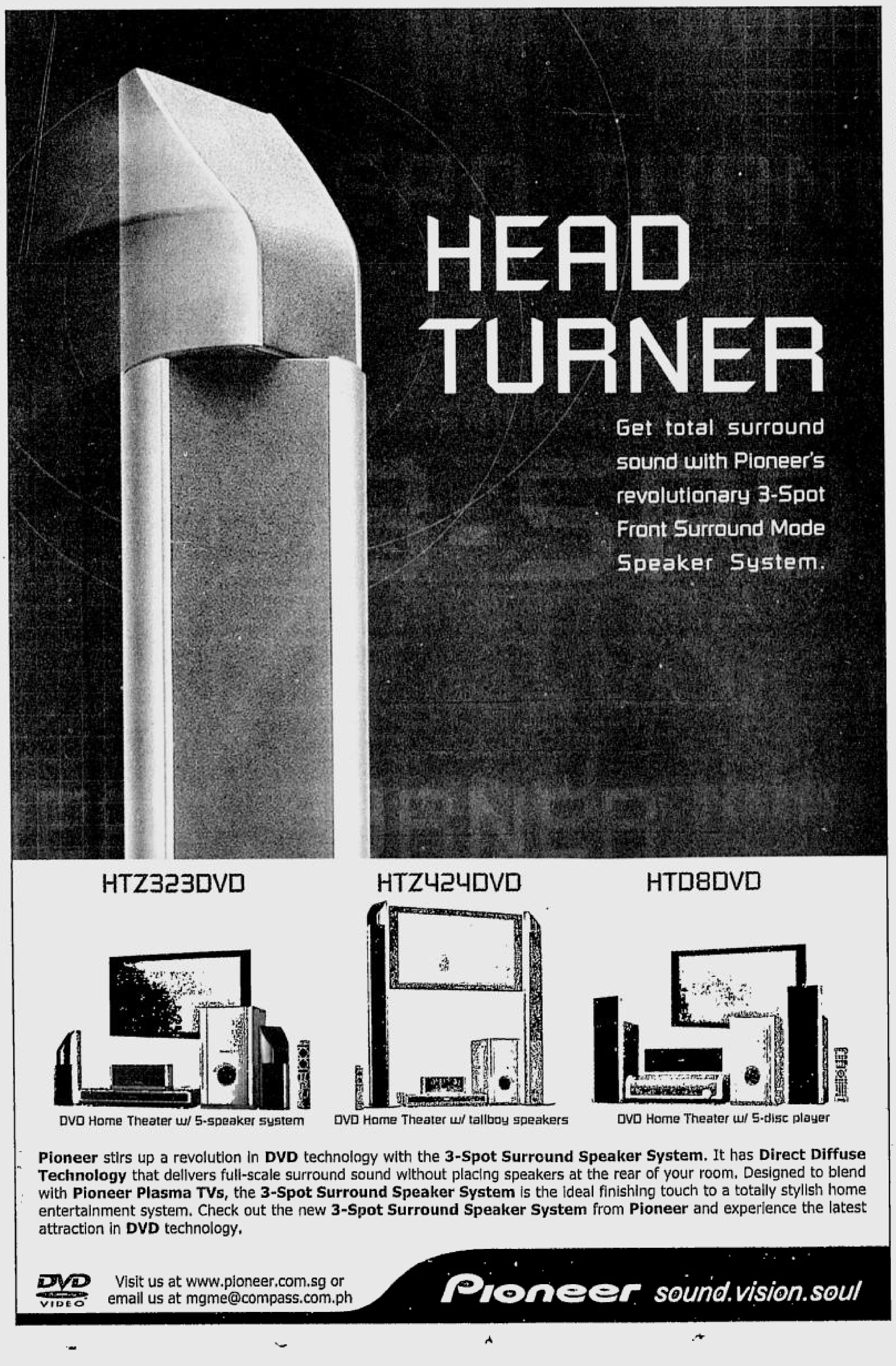
Annan has said his son joined Cotecna at the age of 22 as a trainee in Geneva before he became secretary general and worked in West Africa. The firm was hired by the United Nations on Dec. 31, 1998 to authenticate that food, medicine and other goods entering Iraq corresponded to a list of goods approved for import.

In a statement in April, Cotecna said Kojo Annan's full-time employment—which focused entirely on its activities in Nigeria and Ghana and had nothing to do with the oil-for-food program—began in 1995 and ended in December 1997 after which he was retained as a consultant until early 1999. It did not mention any further payments.

The United Nations previously said Kojo Annan stopped receiving monthly payments from Cotecna at the end of 1999. But Eckhard said Friday he continued to be paid because he had an open-ended no-compete contract which allows an employee who leaves a company to receive money to ensure he won't set up a competing company.

"There is nothing illegal in this," Eckhard said. Also, continuing investigations by the US Congress and the United Nations have not shown any wrongdoing by Cotecna.

Cotecna spokesperson Ginny Wolfe said Kojo Annan was paid $2,500 (euro1,887) a month "to prevent him from working for any of their competitors in Africa" which she described as a very competitive market. *AP*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Car bomb kills 7 more in Iraq's deadliest month

BAIJI, Iraq—A car bomb exploded in a crowded market in a town north of Baghdad on Tuesday, killing at least seven people and wounding 20, underlining Iraq's severe security problems with elections just two months away.

As well as near daily attacks on Iraqi security forces and civilians, November has been one of the deadliest months for US troops, with 134 killed. The highest death toll was in April this year, when 135 soldiers and Marines were killed.

The bomb went off in a busy staging area in the oil-refining town of Baiji, 180 km north of Baghdad, as a US military patrol was passing. The blast destroyed market stalls and caused panic among the throng of shoppers, witnesses said.

A doctor at Baiji hospital, Samir Mehdi, said he had received seven dead civilians from the blast and 18 wounded, including a child. A US military spokesperson said two US soldiers were also wounded.

In a separate attack in the town, an insurgent fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a US tank, wounding a US soldier and damaging the tank, the spokesperson said.

Baiji, site of a major oil refinery, has seen a surge in violence over the past three weeks, since US forces launched their offensive on the rebel town of Falluja, west of Baghdad.

That assault provoked guerrilla attacks across a swathe of Sunni Muslim areas of the country including towns such as Samarra, Tikrit, Baquba and Mosul, as well as Baiji.

The US military has said it expects an escalation in attacks in the build up to elections due to be held on Jan. 30 and has said it plans to do all it can before then to quell the insurgency and put Iraqi forces in charge of security.

Leading Sunni Arab political parties want the elections postponed by up to six months, saying their supporters will not be able to vote freely due to the violence in Sunni areas.

Sunni Arabs make up only around 20 percent of Iraq's population but dominated the ruling elite during the rule of Saddam Hussein. Several Sunni parties say they will boycott the elections unless the government agrees to postpone them.

But parties representing Iraq's 60-percent Shiite majority, oppressed under Saddam, are demanding that the polls go ahead on time to cement their political dominance in the new Iraq.

Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Death toll in China mine blast rises to 63

BEIJING—The death toll in a coal mine explosion in central China has risen to 63, with 103 miners still missing, the government said Tuesday, as an underground fire and toxic fumes released by the blast hampered rescue work. Hopes were fading for the missing miners. If none survive, Sunday's explosion would be one of the deadliest disasters in a decade to hit China's accident-prone mining industry. State television said parts of the Chenjiashan Coal Mine were still burning.

AP

Burma hit over Suu Kyi's detention

BANGKOK—Burma's extension of house arrest for democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi was condemned on Tuesday by rights groups and the United States, but drew no rebuke from neighbors. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy said on Monday she had been told by police that her house arrest had been extended under a tough security law. She could be confined at her Yangon home until September 2005, the NLD said. No official confirmation has been issued by Yangon or by junta leaders attending a regional summit in Laos.

Reuters

Cuba releases 3 dissidents

HAVANA—International rights groups welcomed Cuba's surprise release of three dissidents jailed last year in a broad crackdown, and called on Fidel Castro's government to free another 65 still behind bars. Those freed on parole included economics writer Oscar Espinosa Chepe, who was hospitalized with a liver ailment, and dissidents Marcelo Lopez and Margarito Broche. Lopez has a neurological disorder, and Broche suffered a heart attack behind bars in August.

AP

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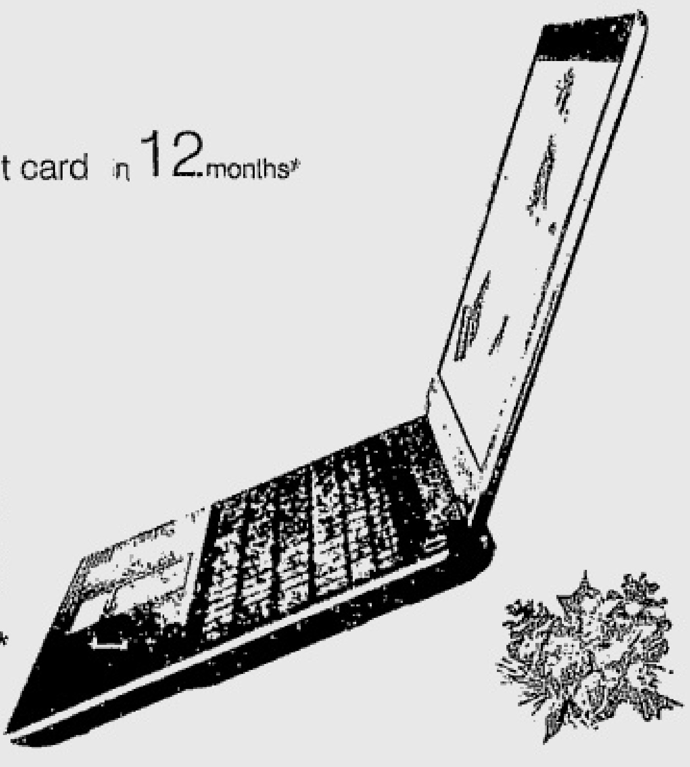

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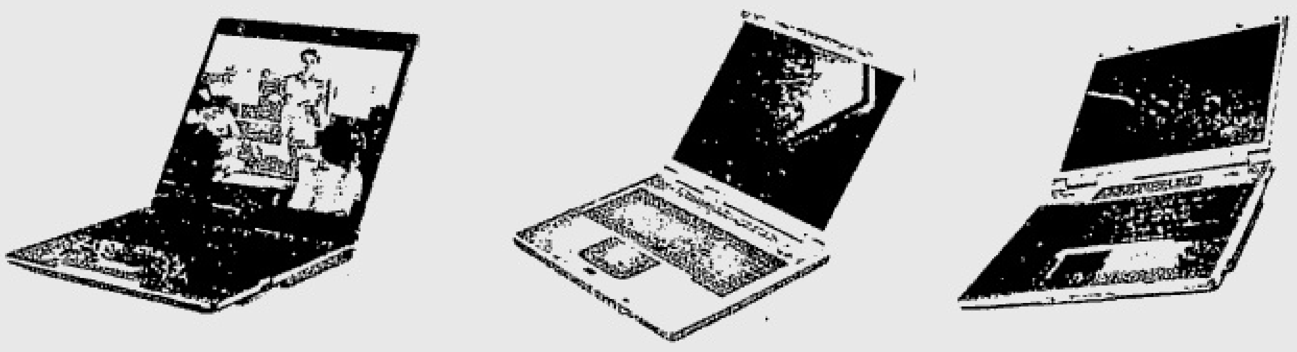

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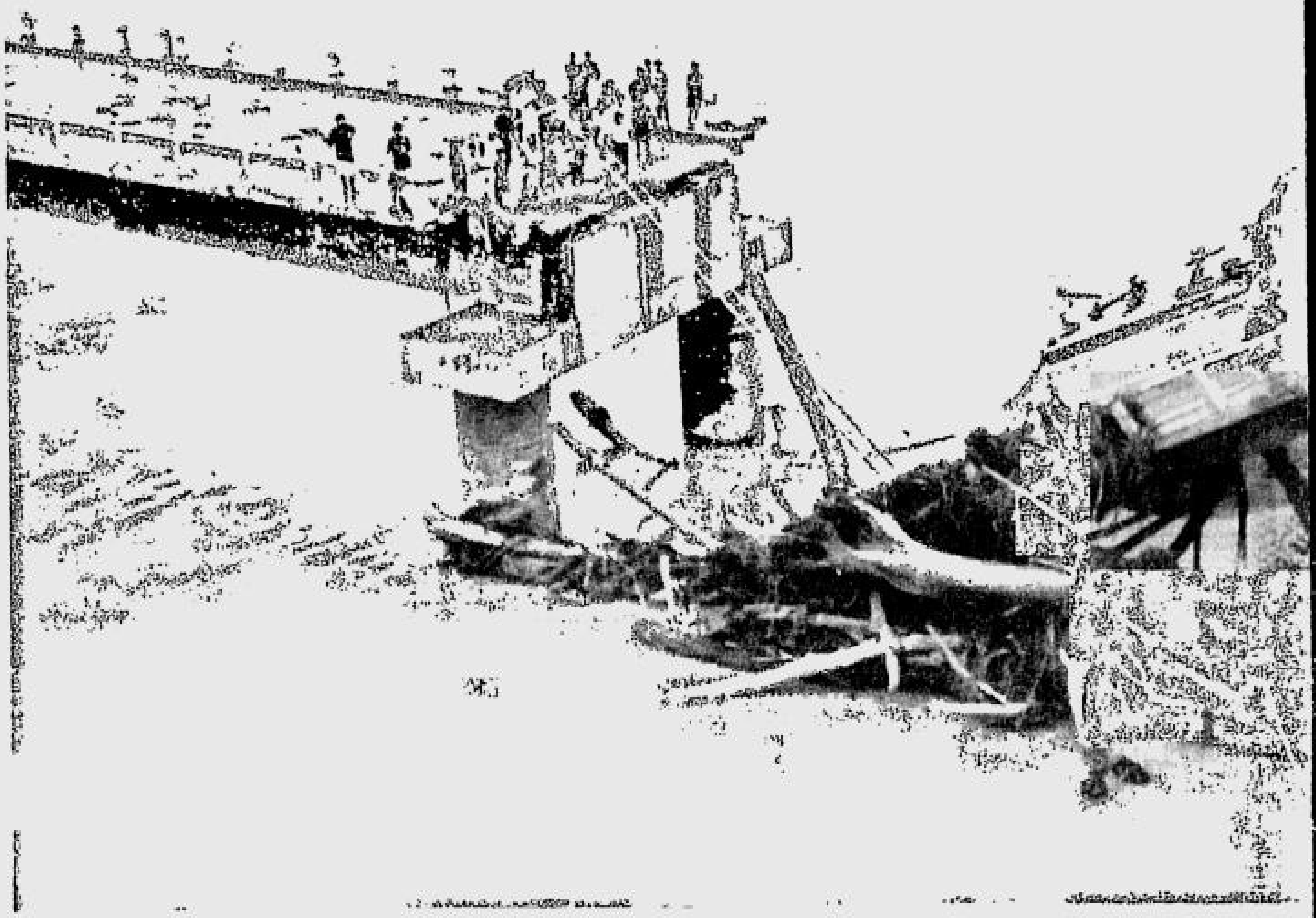
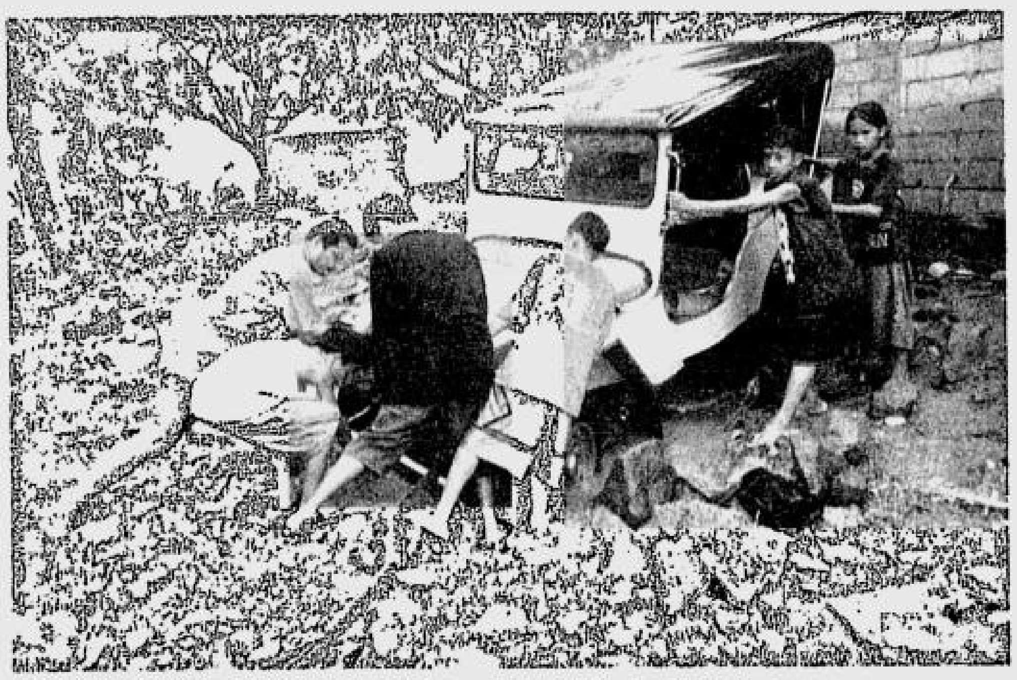
SAN MATEO, RIZAL: Evacuation center keeps the children high and dry. JOAN BONDOC



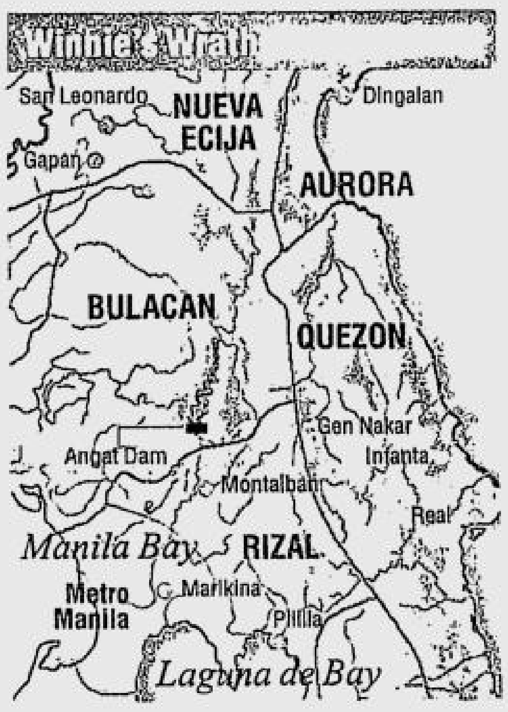
AERIAL view of broken bridge over the Agus River that connects Infanta and General Nakar town in Quezon province.

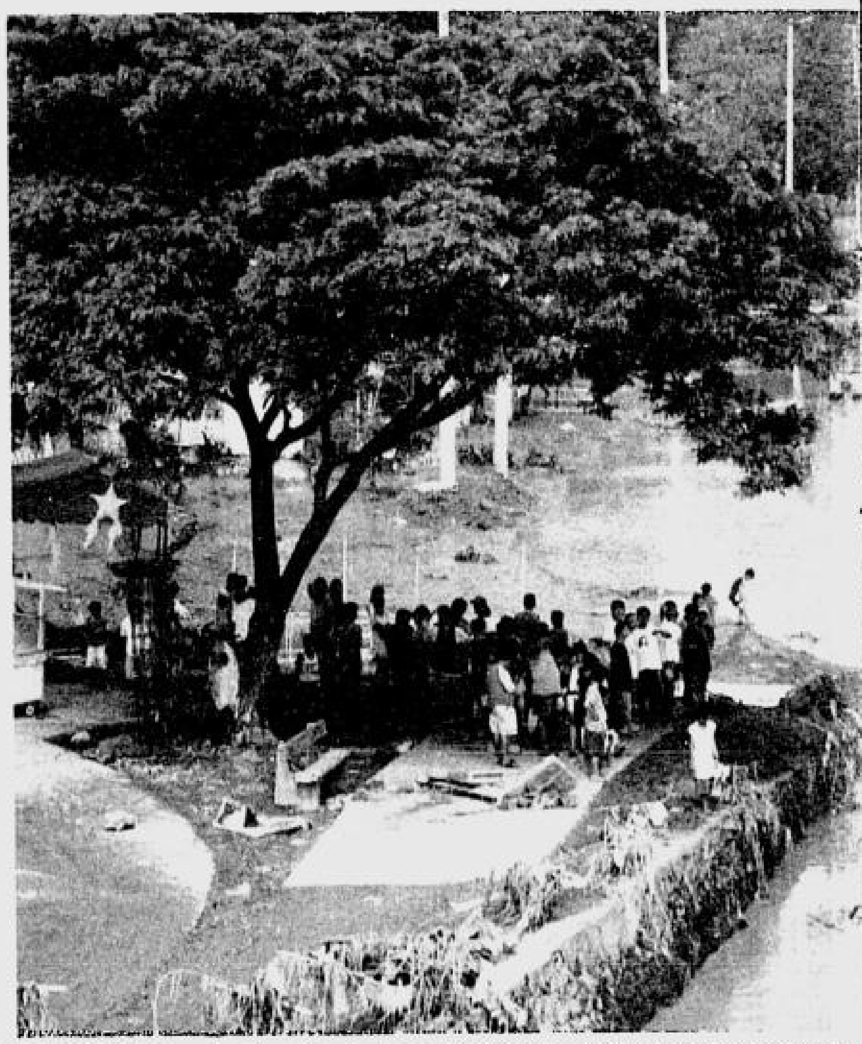


GAPAN, NUEVA ECIJA: "Winnie" was strong enough to whack this jeep. ERIK ARAZAS

> 'All the houses in the coastal villages of my town were wiped out,' said General Nakar Mayor Hernando Avellaneda

RODRIGUEZ, RIZAL: Only the audio component and its owner are left standing. JOAN BONDOC





MARIKINA: Overflowing river washes away tiangge stalls located in the river pa

'Winnie' leaves 341 dead

From page A1

pecially to Quezon, one of the hardest-hit provinces.

In one town alone, Real, Quezon, 114 were killed, according to Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman. One hundred died in Infanta and 92 others in General Nakar. About 150 were also missing in Real, she said.

At least 19 died in Paltik, Dingalan, Quezon; eight were killed in Montalban and Pililla towns in Rizal; five died in Aurora and three in Bulacan, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had gone to Laos to attend a Southeast Asian summit, cut short her schedule by two hours and flew back here last night.

She was expected to arrive in Manila at about 11 last night and visit the devastated areas today, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Winnie struck just a week after Typhoons Unding and Violeta also battered the country, leaving about 160 dead or missing.

Winnie had moved into the South China Sea by yesterday morning but a more powerful storm, Yoyong, was on course to hit a wider swath of the country possibly tomorrow. It was gathering strength as it approached the east coast. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Death toll may rise

Police said they feared the death toll would rise as they and local officials continued to receive reports of devastation from affected areas through two-way radios and cell phones after the floods destroyed other means of communications.

Earlier in the day, General Nakar Mayor Hernando Avellaneda said 10 people died in floods and landslides in his town.

"More persons were reported buried in Barangay Masikap but the roads going to the area are impassable. Only the military helicopters could bring us to the site," Avellaneda said. He pleaded to a helicopter pilot to bring rescuers to the landslide sites but gusty winds prevented the pilot from taking off.

Real and Infanta towns were isolated. All roads between these two towns were rendered impassable by landslides along the highways.

Rampaging waters also washed out bridges.

ABS-CBN television showed 13 bodies piled up on a road in the town of Real.

Illegal logging blamed

OFFICIALS partly blamed the extensive floods on illegal logging which had denuded the mountains.

In Quezon, flash floods from the Sierra Madre mountain range swept away houses and destroyed bridges in General Nakar, Infanta and Real towns.

The Sierra Madre range has been the site of massive timber poaching by illegal loggers operating in the area since the 1950s.

"In the case of Nueva Ecija, there is no doubt that illegal logging ... is a cause of the flash floods," Environment Secretary Mike Defensor said.

The base of a newly built concrete bridge over the Agus River was smashed by huge logs.

"All the houses in the coastal villages of my town were wiped out," Avellaneda said.

"What you can hear all over the town were cries of cold, hungry children. Most of them are already sick. There were no dry clothes to change the wet ones they had on their bodies. We need help and make it fast," he said.

Southern Luzon Command chief Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay and several Quezon police officials tried to reach Infanta but the helicopter could not find a dry landing spot as the whole town was submerged in water.

In Real town, Fr. Charlito Collendrez of the Prelature of Infanta was swept away by the flood while trying to tie a rope which people he was rescuing could hold on to. He was later found dead.

Avellaneda feared the many missing in his town were already dead.

Not a single house

Not a single house was left in Sitio Matatambo, Sitio Boulevard and Sitio Puting Bato in Barangay Umiray, which was submerged in water.

"Some buses were carried by floods into the sea," Quezon police Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac said.

Winnie's rains also flooded 26 towns and 88 barangays in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija provinces in Region III, Rizal and Metro Manila.

Floods as deep as 8 feet swamped Barangay Pias in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija.

On the national highway near Gapan in Nueva Ecija, about 100 passengers were rescued after being stranded for hours on top of three buses stuck in deep floodwaters.

A woman passenger on one bus frantically called radio station dzRH, saying raging floodwaters were rising close to the bus' windows.

Rescue efforts were hampered by landslides blocking roads and a lack of helicopters.

"It's unbelievable how the rescuers have been unable to reach these areas because the bridges have been broken down and there are very strong currents they are dealing with so the rubber boats also cannot go through," said Soliman.

Surrounded by water

The Runeses were sleeping soundly in Sitio Sabah, Barangay San Jose in Rodriguez, Rizal, when their parents woke them up, warning of imminent flooding.

Their home was about 100 meters away from the river. Looking out, the couple saw they had nowhere to go. They were trapped, surrounded by water.

"So we went to the rooftop. I could see around 30 more people on the rooftops ... all my neighbors," Runes said.

One by one, the houses crumbled like sand castles hit by forceful waves. In a flash, the couple found themselves in the murky waters, along with several other people. It was dark, and cold.

As their home crashed, Runes said he held on to his wife but lost track of their parents in the ensuing chaos. They didn't know how but the couple managed to grab the banana trunk and hang on to it.

"While the river was carrying us, I told my wife to pray to God. Only He knew whether we were going to die that night or not," Runes said.

When they reached the Marikina portion of the river, the couple saw J.R. Mancero. The boy had been clinging to a piece of styrofoam. They swam near him and grabbed him.

With J.R., trying to stay afloat became even more difficult, according to Dante. But he kept telling them not to let go of each other.

Prayers answered

All they could do was let the flood swallow them or ask God to rescue them, Runes said. There was little hope.

By midnight, the water had risen to 17 meters and three hours later, to 19.3 meters.

They were fortunate—their prayers were answered.

Upstream, another couple struggled to live, but failed.

Neighbors found the bodies of Gilbert and Rina Baybayan, 24 and 20, respectively, also of Sitio Sabah in Rodriguez, Rizal, on the bank of the river the next day.

Their bodies were discovered not far from each other. Relatives remarked how they had tried to hold on to each other even in death.

Runes, Florence and J.R. hit a small island near the bank of the river shortly before midnight.

"Then we saw this man. We cried to him. He heard us and trained his flashlight on us," Runes said.

"He had a banca and used it to get to us," he said, adding that the man's arms must have been very strong to withstand the current.

Who was the man?

Runes said he did not know who the man was. "He was wearing an undershirt and jeans and was around 50 years old or more," he said.

At the evacuation center, J.R. sobbed incessantly. He was half-naked when fished out.

He still does not know what happened to his parents, Lilia and Santos, and to his aunt Lilia and 7-year-old niece Leslie Ann.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said he expected damage to crops to be minimal as most rice farmers in northern Luzon, the main rice-growing area, had already harvested this season's crop.

The most destructive was Typhoon Thelma, which struck Leyte island in November 1991 and unleashed floods in Ormoc City that drowned about 5,000 people. *With reports from Fe Zamora, Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Connie S. Fernandez; Tonette Orejas, Carmela Reyes and Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Bureau and Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI N. Luzon Bureau*

Pagasa ne
for rain g

From page A1

the government's bureaucratic back burner, the purchase of rain gauge radar equipment and typhoon tracking radars could not be expected for at least a couple of more years.

Each radar would cost P35 million to P40 million, Pagasa officer-in-charge Dr. Prisco Nilo told the INQUIRER.

"Metro Manila would need two to cover the area end to end. But these two could already also service nearby areas (in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog)," Nilo said in an interview.

To measure rainfall

He said the rain gauge radars could determine the expected amount of rainfall by monitoring the size of the clouds as a weather disturbance approached threatened areas.

"It is so expensive that in our scaled-down modernization [proposal], we only made provisions for a number that would only cover critical areas [and not the entire country]," the weather bureau chief said.

Winnie, a relatively weak weathe bance compared to Typhoons Unc Violeta, packed maximum winds o kph. But its rains caused widespre floods and landslides, resulting in ous deaths and heavy damage to pr

"The center of tropical depress nie actually passed through [the gion] but its cloud formations rea far as Central Luzon. Of course, th also [affect] Metro Manila," Nilo sa

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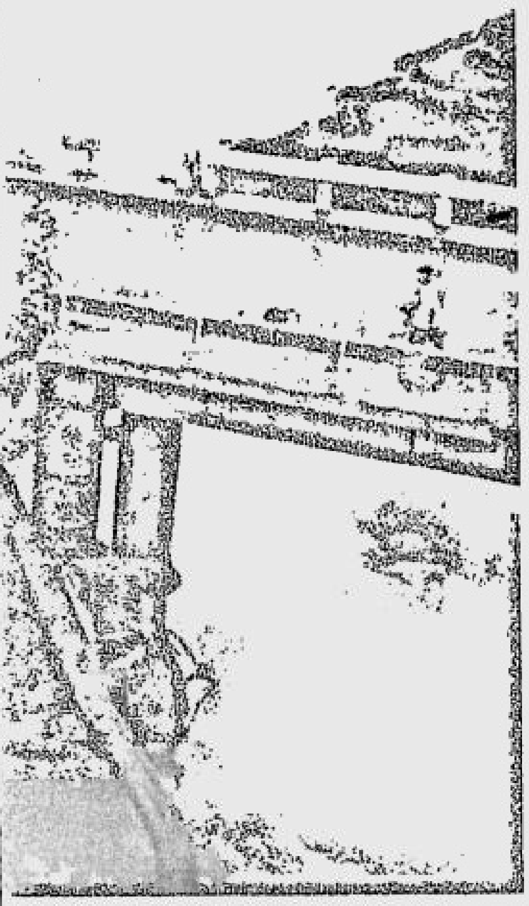

DELFIN MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

BRIDGE TO NOWHERE: The newly built concrete span from Infanta to Real collapses over troubled waters.

ROGER MARGALLO

k.;

ROGER CARPIO

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HE KNOW

eeds at least sev- r radars, a type of can predict isturbances. r radars make use pler effect, or the change in frequen- elength of a wave ceived by an ob- ving relative to e of the waves. r radars work by ut pulses of radio ich bounce off ob- ain and insects. By the time between the time it takes es to return, the em can calculate ce and direction of

avier the rain, the al is reflected back r. A computer the radar informa- map to indicate with rainfall. A ftware also lets the cus in on small ar- ing forecasters to eather in towns or borhoods. PDI

SOURCE: PAGASA, USATO

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At present, Pagasa's flood forecasting efforts are focused on the monitoring of so-called river basins or areas affected by the major rivers of Cagayan Valley, Agno, Pampanga and Bicol.

Enough warnings given

In the case of Winnie's deadly strike across Southern Tagalog and the Bicol region, Nilo said Pagasa was able to give adequate warnings against landslides and flash floods despite the absence of rain gauge radars.

"We issued several weather bulletins on Winnie every six hours and they included warnings on flash floods and landslides in the areas that would be affected," Nilo said.

But he said the mountains of Quezon were already so drenched with rains brought by Typhoons "Violeta" and "Unding" that the area could only hold a limited amount of water from Winnie's downpour.

Runoff water

"The rains were heavy on the mountains [in Quezon]," Nilo said in an interview.

"Because Typhoons Violeta and Unding just passed over [the mountains] days before, the ground was saturated. There was a lot of runoff (water) because the ground could not absorb... (and was) loose," he added.

With the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, Pagasa expects most of the weather disturbances in the weeks remaining in 2004 to pass across roughly the same path as Unding, Violeta and Winnie in southern Luzon, Bicol and the Visayas.

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
▪Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
▪P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
▪Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
▪Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 ▪Advertising 897-4807
▪Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

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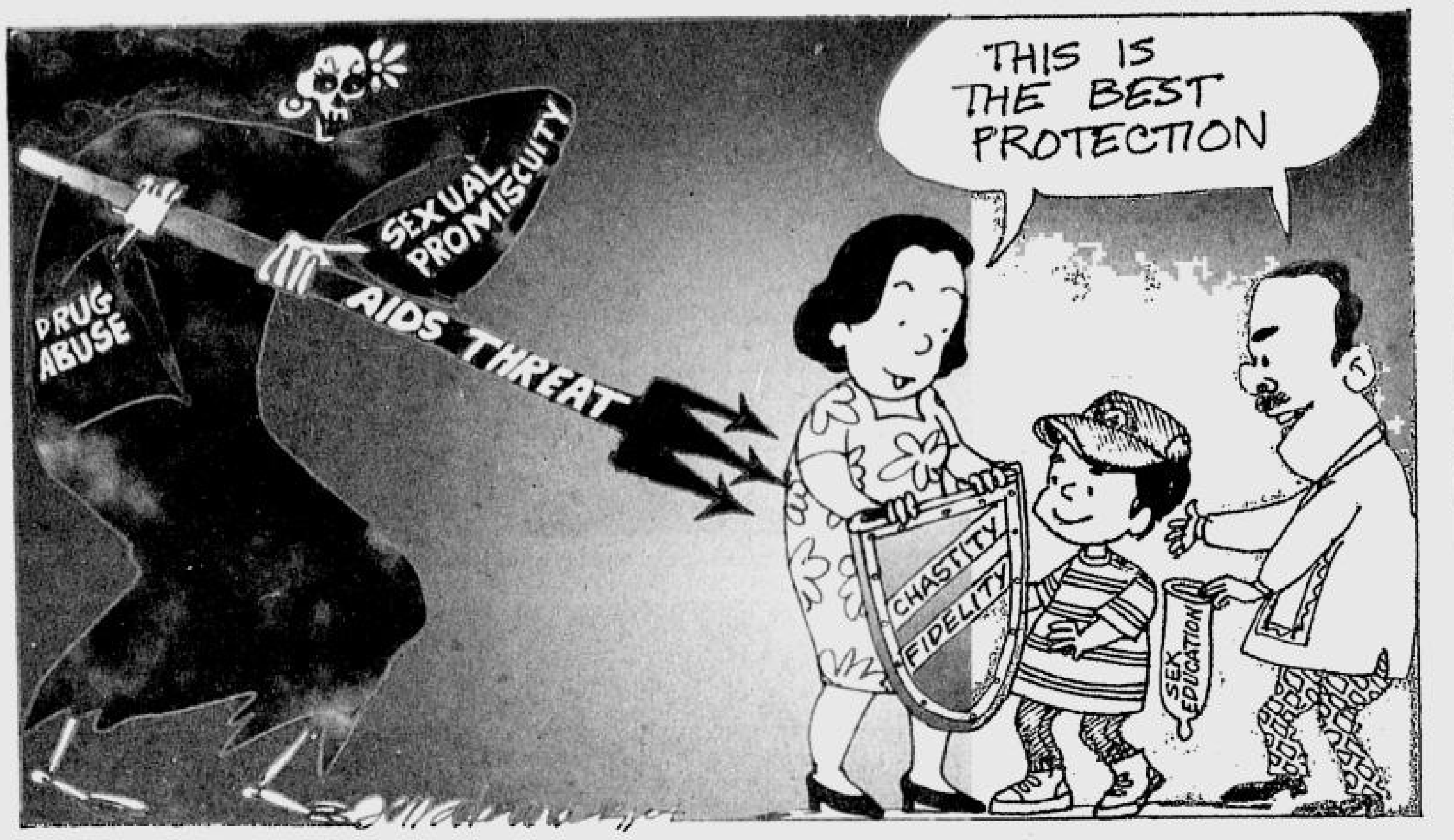


Musical chairs

EDITORIAL

WHEN President Macapagal-Arroyo first told the INQUIRER she intended to further "civilianize" the Department of National Defense by replacing its undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, her move was not proclaimed as the opening salvo in a planned reorganization of the government. However, the Palace quickly followed it up with an announcement that it was undertaking a Cabinet revamp.

As expected, the plan to reorganize the executive branch, which is necessary, has been marred by the usual politicking and clouded by suspicions that it is yet another politically motivated, and therefore opportunistic, move. The reason such suspicions hang over the Palace pronouncements is due to the justification given by the administration for the changes, which is to stem the downward turn in the President's public approval rating.

The President has a mixed record when it comes to appointments. For every Haydee Yorac there's an Ace Durano or more. As a result, a wait-and-see attitude toward whatever changes have been announced is the only sensible tack to take.

The President has broad powers to reorganize the executive department. At crucial periods in our history, presidents have also received from Congress authorization to reorganize the government. This happened with the inauguration of the Commonwealth, the Third Republic, and, by virtue of her revolutionary powers, early in the administration of President Corazon Aquino. The present administration has talked often about the need to streamline the bureaucracy. Merging and abolishing agencies in the executive are things the public would support, if only they were done according to a logical plan. But to date, the public has not been informed of any such plan, if it exists. Instead, it has had to listen to a lot of hype which hasn't been followed up by any substantive change.

Reengineering the executive department requires a lot of study and a great deal of explaining. While we know that a study on reorganizing Malacañang itself is underway, we do not know of a larger, well thought-out effort being undertaken with regard to the entire executive department.

When the public is given no information, only speculation reigns supreme. The public and the press only see a dizzying, and eventually exhausting, round of musical chairs. Action as reaction, and efforts only in pursuit of short-term objectives.

The short-term objective is to arrest the slide in the President's popularity. Instead of resorting to spin, the administration should be looking at the lack of substance that is the cause of much of that popularity.

The President can say she's determined to make changes since she's already unpopular anyway, but her people still need to ask why she became unpopular in the first place. One major reason is the inability of the administration to follow through on its rhetoric. Another reason is the willy-nilly manner of appointing, firing and shuffling people—and the accompanying conceited belief that the public will confuse this for something meaningful. It is not. Whatever the music, it is still musical chairs.

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "The mountains are high, and the emperor is far away." It refers to the tendency of rulers to be remote, and the difficulty in making appeals from the ruled heard by them. It can also refer to the tendency of rulers to take too much of a macro approach, when what the people want is for change on the micro level. The public wants to see an end to official extravagance. It wants to see a heightened sense of professionalism and efficiency in the public service. It wants to endure fewer convoys with sirens messing up traffic, and instead enjoy the faster release of official documents.

In the end, a round of musical chairs only trivializes the appointments process and makes a president look whimsical. It was precisely the growing suspicion that government was being run according to his moods and caprices that eroded support for Ms Arroyo's predecessor, Joseph Estrada.

This is what is troubling the ship of state now. The country wants a plan, and once it is announced, it wants the President to stick to it. Everyone, from people in government to the public that pays the taxes to support the government, deserves no less.

Full speed ahead for railroad, north and south

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SOME opposition senators have got their priorities screwed up. They are opposing the NorthRail because the project, they say, would displace the squatters along the railroad tracks. They give more importance to law violators than to the railroad that will benefit the whole country by making the transport of cargo and passengers faster and cheaper while decongesting the highways and roads of Luzon. The reason for their strange behavior, of course, is politics. By pretending to fight for the squatters, they are already courting their votes even if the next election is still more than two years away.

In the first place, the squatters will not just be ejected. On the contrary, they will be relocated to several housing projects from the squalid, congested and dangerous squatter colonies where they live only inches away from the railroad tracks and death. This, even if there is a law that says squatters on the right of way of government infrastructure projects (such as railroads) are not entitled to relocation or assistance. But the squatters along the tracks of the NorthRail can choose from relocation sites in Towerville, San Jose del Monte, Barangay Bignay, Valenzuela, both in Bulacan, or Rodriguez in Rizal.

The latter is just next door to Metro Manila and much bigger. It is a 2,500-hectare site for a mass housing project only 15 percent of which is occupied. It can accommodate 20,000 more families. And unlike other municipalities that don't want to be relocation sites for squatters, Rodriguez Mayor Pedro Cuerpo is inviting them to settle there.

Those who would like to go back to their provinces will each be given a P50,000 financial assistance under the "Balik-Probinsiya" program. They can use the money for transportation home, to buy a home lot, build a modest house, or as capital for a livelihood project.

Relocation is always the best choice for squatters. Those who were relocated to Pagasa in Quezon City, Sapang Palay in Bulacan, and other relocation sites are now glad they were relocated although they resisted it initially. These squatters are now modestly wealthy as the lots awarded to them are now worth many times what they paid for them. Many of them have flourishing businesses there.

On the other hand, those who resisted relocation are still living in the same squalid and unhealthy conditions. So if politicians try to prevent the relocation of squatters, they are not really after the welfare of the squatters. They are only after the votes of the squatters.

* * *

I think reviving and improving the railroad in the whole island of Luzon, along with the "nautical highway" to link the islands of the Philippines from Luzon to Mindanao, is the best project of President Macapagal-Arroyo. They have very high social and economic returns. They will drastically reduce the cost of transporting goods and people all over the archipelago. For instance, the rail fare from Caloocan to Malolos is P43 as against P70 in bus fare, not including the additional fee for the toll on the expressway. For the first year of full operation, it is projected that there will be 164,745 passengers using the NorthRail daily. On the 10th year of operation, the projection is that the system will transport 363,193 passengers daily, plus thousands of tons of cargo.

All the world's progressive countries, developed and Third World (Europe, the United States, Russia, Japan, Australia, China, India, the Indo-Chinese countries, etc.), do not only have good railroads but are still improving them. We used to have a good enough railroad from Damortis, La Union, to Legazpi, Albay, until the administration of President Diosdado Macapagal. GMA's father used to take the train from Tutuban to Damortis when going to Baguio, so he had enough time and elbow room to work on official papers. The night train to Legazpi, the Bicol Express, was a relaxing way to travel such a long distance, what with air-conditioned, first-class coaches and dining cars. You could sleep comfortably on board and wake up refreshed the next morning in Legazpi.

After Macapagal, however, the Philippine National Railways was allowed to deteriorate, some say because of the lobby by American automotive makers promoting the use of buses, trucks and cars. After 35 years of neglect, the rail service to Damortis is no more, the tracks invaded by squatters. Tutuban, the main depot, was leased and converted into a shopping mall. The south line to Legazpi, while still running, has so deteriorated that derailment has become common, the latest of which happened in Quezon where scores were killed.

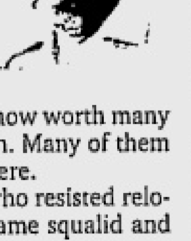
Since the NorthRail is already being funded by China, I think we should negotiate with another country like Japan, which has one of the most advanced technologies on railroads, to improve and finance the SouthRail. In fact, I think the NorthRail should be extended not only to San Fernando, La Union, (the fourth phase) but all the way to Laoag, Ilocos Norte, and eventually around the tip of Luzon to Aparri, Cagayan, down to Cagayan Valley and back to Pangasinan.

The SouthRail, on the other hand, should be extended to Sorsogon, from where the nautical highway to the Visayas can begin. The New People's Army is strong in Sorsogon because it is largely undeveloped and the people feel they are neglected. The railroad will help in the development of the province and banish poverty and subversion there. For one, it would make it easy for trainloads of dollar-laden tourists who want to watch whale sharks and sun themselves on remote beaches to go to Sorsogon.

(To be continued)

Weird logic

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

ONE TV station had a curious commentary about the transport strike last week. A TV personality was interviewing a government official who seemed perfectly reasonable. The official's tone was pleading. She understood that jeepney and bus drivers had every right to strike, she said, but she wished they would refrain from coercion and violence. They had every right to stop plying their routes and ask other drivers to join them, but they had no right to stop buses and jeepneys on the streets and force the drivers to join them.

She showed a picture of a bus that had been turned on its side and lamented it. Ultimately, she said, coercion and violence were counterproductive. It merely turned the public, who might otherwise sympathize with the drivers, against them. She blamed the militants who had joined the strike for that lapse into anarchy. She dearly wished, she said, the legitimate strikers would not allow themselves to be swayed by outside elements.

The interviewer seized on the last thought. Yes, he said, the hand of outside elements seemed patent in the strike. It was to be seen in its very demands. He produced a leaflet the drivers had been handing out and then went through the strikers' list of demands. These included higher fare rates, increases in workers' pay generally, rollback of oil prices, rollback of power rates, the prosecution of corrupt government officials.

The call for higher fare rates and the rollback of oil prices, the interviewer said, seemed well within the province of the strike. But such things as power rates and corruption were not. Maybe they could be the subject of another strike, but not this one. Clearly, he said, this was the handiwork of outside elements, the same outside elements that fomented the violence at Hacienda Luisita.

Well, first off, the part about violence and coercion. I agree entirely, they are counterproductive. I said the same thing some 15 years ago when striking bus and jeepney drivers, who were calling for a rollback of oil prices, burned buses in the provinces. I called the people who burned the buses goons. And I had a heated exchange with the late Popoy Lagman as a result of it.

The strike, which started out being hugely popular, suddenly turned sour, and Lagman blamed the media for it. Media, he said, diverted attention away from the real issue, which was the unreasonableness of the oil price increases, by dwelling inordinately on the bus-burning. I said that was not media's fault. The situation, I said, was not unlike people watching a basketball game when somebody streaks naked on the court. Imagine yourself in the audience: Who will you look at, the players or the streaker? The bus-burning was someone streaking naked on the court. You burn buses or overturn them, that is all people will see, not your cause. And unlike streakers, who at least draw laughter from the audience, you will draw only curses from them.

As to the "outside elements," what of them? Of course, it's the government line on Luisita, which is idiotic. The blame for the deaths of the farmers in Luisita, as for those in Mendiola 17 years ago, lies squarely with those who ordered the cops and soldiers to fire, not with those who goaded them to strike.

Frankly, I can't understand why anyone would think it is the easiest thing in the world to persuade people to strike. Which underlies the idea of "outside elements goading workers to strike" like the snake tempting Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. It is a very patronizing view of workers, who are presumed to have the IQ of sheep. Anyone who has been remotely involved in a strike will tell you it is the hardest thing in the world to do. Only a compelling reason, one that has to do with life and death, will drive people to strike. Ideology is not a compelling reason. The true leader of a strike is the reason people mounted it. You take that reason away, you stop the strike.

Why should striking drivers hew only to fuel and fare issues? Why may they not take a broader view of the economy, or national affairs generally, and make demands about them? We do not complain when investors pry into every pore of national concerns, from peace and order to the indigenous people, and even meddle in them. We do not complain when businessmen demand political and social reform, threatening to pull out their businesses if these are not met. We assume all these things have to do with their investments and businesses, which give them the right to busy themselves with them. Well, these things affect labor, too, including the kind plied by drivers.

I remember many years ago Menardo Roda, head of Piston, dramatizing that point by saying the long-term solution to the jeepney drivers' woes was genuine land reform. He wasn't entirely joking, he said, as his audience laughed at his proposition. It was so, he said, because of this: If you had genuine land reform, tenants would have land to cultivate. If they had land to cultivate, they would not go to Metro Manila to look for jobs. If they did not go to Metro Manila, Metro Manila would not be overpopulated. If Metro Manila was not overpopulated, there would be no teeming slums, hordes of unemployed and uneducated, and worsening traffic. If there weren't these, there would be no excess of jeepney (and tricycle) drivers, *tong*-collecting cops, and high fuel consumption. If there weren't these, there would be no oil price increases and falling incomes for drivers. So the solution to the drivers' woes was genuine land reform.

The militants put an idea like this into Roda's head? Then by all means let us have militants putting more ideas into more Rodas' heads!

Changes in the Cabinet

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ADMINISTRATION has fueled speculation about a sweeping Cabinet shake-up by the end of the year, as a shock therapy to counter two adverse developments converging at the close of the first six months of President Macapagal-Arroyo's regular term: the deep plunge in her approval rating, and the threat of a downgrade by international credit rating agencies.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye fanned the speculation with the general statement that "All different government agencies are under constant review, constant reorganization" so that they can be streamlined "to become more efficient." The statement has not at all conveyed the urgency of revamping the Cabinet. The truth is that there are two critical areas of concern: the fiscal deficit crisis and corruption, particularly.

The first problem (the plunging approval rating) is political, and the second (downgrading of the credit rating) is a fiscal problem. A Cabinet revamp can act as a shock therapy if it leads to the appointment of new faces that could reinvigorate administration efforts to reduce the growing deficit gap and attack the underlying causes of the plunging approval rating, which are rising inflation and growing concern over corruption. Thus, a revamped Cabinet should have fresh faces to replace rather tired ones and inspire confidence and expectations of injection of new energy. Energy Secretary Vince Perez and Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, we have learned on good authority, have handed in their resignations, although Perez, according to our source, wants the finance portfolio even if his stewardship of the energy department has been less than brilliant or spectacular.

Who heads these two portfolios—finance and energy—are considered keys to whether the President could reinvigorate the Cabinet. International credit rating institutions, such as Moody's, are watching appointments to these portfolios.

The President, we have learned from authoritative sources, has offered the energy portfolio to opposition leader, Sen. Edgardo Angara, or his nominee from his party (LDP) or the opposition. But Angara, while willing to cooperate with the administration in a "Cabinet of national unity" on the basis of critical cooperation on programs, wants to stay in the Senate, where his term is up to 2007, knowing fully well the Senate is his secure political base.

Getting an opposition figure into the Cabinet, whether or not it is Angara, might be an astute political move to facilitate the passage of the administration's "national unity" legislative agenda in Congress, but it is doubtful if the business community would consider such political alliance-building as the correct antidote to a deficit crisis. The expectations of the financial community from a Cabinet revamp are reflected and best expressed by Ramon del Rosario Jr., chair of the Philippine-US Business Council and former finance secretary who said that "tapping highly respected persons with excellent records and untarnished reputations will always be welcome." But he added: "The priority now should still be to put solid revenue and other fiscal measures in place and to address corruption, particularly in the military and government."

The credit rating institutions have put under the microscope how many of the key tax and revenue measures can be pushed through Congress by the end of the year as a test of the administration's capacity to get things done. At least four measures are the focus of close scrutiny: the reduction of value-added tax exemptions, lateral attrition in revenue-collection agencies, franchise on telecommunication companies, and increase in excise tax on cigarettes and spirits.

Del Rosario's concern over corruption echoes the results of a Pulse Asia survey in October and November which showed that the number of Filipinos concerned about corruption had jumped from 23 percent in February to 39 percent in October, because of the highly publicized corruption charges against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, former comptroller of the Armed Forces. The highest concern, which was mainly responsible for the plunge in the President's net approval rating was inflation which nearly doubled to 17.7 percent during her elected term. Both inflation and corruption are corrosive solvents on the President's net approval rating, sending it down to a record low of 7 percent, one of the lowest registered by any of the post-Marcos presidents. The President could not shrug off this drop in approval rating by saying that inflation was a consequence of the tough economic reform initiatives related to her tax reform package as well as factors beyond her control, particularly the rise in oil prices. When examined closely, the tax package has little to do with inflation.

If by the new year, inflation is not checked, the President will face a new round of public discontent. The issue of corruption has now shifted to the Armed Forces, and the defense department has become the target of reorganization below Cabinet level, with some undersecretaries being shuffled out.

As to how sweeping the revamp would be, we have a clue in the appointment of the President's publicist, Dante Ang, as chair of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos, with Cabinet rank. If Ang is one of her weapons to reverse the decline of her ratings, close the deficit gap and rejuvenate her new Cabinet, then her administration is in trouble. A Cabinet revamp could inject fresh blood into an administration that has run out of steam in its first six months, but the complexion of a new Cabinet could also reveal a shallow bench of reinforcements.

The US—moral and traditional?

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

HEADLINE: "Moral values won the vote."

Knee-jerk reaction: Huh, the US, moral? Where but through American TV and movies have we and great parts of the world learned to embrace, to kiss, to shed clothes, to go to bed so easily and torridly as soon as chemistry simmers? And what about the morality of its war policy and the Iraq war—pre-emptive, unilateral, aggressive? And what about its leaders' deception, the covert business with Osama bin Laden and family, the greedy eye for oil, the false claims about weapons of mass destruction? And what about the human rights violations as long as they are outside the United States? Whatever happened to those photos showing inhuman treatment of prisoners?

Cool down. At least three parallels with our country emerge.

First, it seems that the moral, conservative, religious "droves" that voted for Bush have as narrow a definition of morality as our moralistic and religious conservatives. It's largely a personal and domestic morality that has shrunk to sex-love-marriage concretizing these days to gay rights, same-sex marriage, family planning and the like.

But that is just part of the whole. Morality is nothing less than the entire spectrum of good and evil, right and wrong. Morality extends from the personal to social morality, like a probably unjust war in the case of Bush, like corruption in the case of our public officials, like abortion, all of which sweep entire societies. We cannot just pry into domestic infidelities of our officials and allow them their humongous corruption. Who else besides Marcos and Estrada have been driven out for social immorality?

Second, this US election introduced most of us to "Middle America" described by Randy David as "conservative, deeply nationalistic, moralistic and wary of foreigners." The face of the United States that most of us know is quite the opposite, epitomized by the East Coast lorded over by New York and Washington, D.C.; the West Coast, California, to us; Las Vegas, farther in; and Orlando, Florida down below—a totality which impresses us as progressive, prosperous, sexually permissive, liberal, materialistic.

> One wonders whether the Faith Coalition was genuine or manufactured, something like doing the right thing for shadowy reasons

What is this Middle America that delivered the United States to Bush? Is this the heartland of America? Is it present all over the United States or concentrated in less known regions like the Midwest? Is it really as traditional, conservative and religious as reported? Is it the body that determines a national election?

The two faces of America may be akin to our situation. For all its visibility, Metro Manila is not the Philippines. The country's "enlightened" sectors will not determine the vote. Sorry, but people in the provinces and our teeming informal settlers (politically correct euphemism for squatters) will carry and will continue to carry more Estradas and Revillas to office.

The third and perhaps most serious, because insidious, point is the much vaunted "Faith Coalition" and President Bush' religiousness. Might not the Faith Coalition have been a consummate political strategy, a creation of consummate spinners rather than an unsolicited, deep-down manifestation of a people's moral and religious values? "For the past four years Bush has been deliberately assembling the building blocks of a formidable faith coalition," building "relationships with a strikingly diverse range of religious leaders."

It can of course be argued that those sterling, moral, etc. qualities already resided in the people and Bush and his team were astute enough to bring them out and consolidate them, with the Bible-quoting president as the leading light. Did he not, in the third debate, quite fulsomely declare his religious faith? The Americans obviously fell for that.

Still, one wonders whether the Faith Coalition was genuine or manufactured, something like doing the right thing for shadowy reasons, another case of using religion for political purposes.

And since we are great mimics, both politicians and Church personages will only be too happy to replicate the feat in our country. Sen. Richard Gordon has already said that "candidates wielding so-called moral and traditional values could ensure victory at the polls." After all, we too easily esteem a person who is "religious." Never mind that he may be a split-level Christian. Watch the politicians scramble for "faith coalitions."

The Church, on the other hand, would certainly like to believe that a "morality vote" does reside in the electorate. Archbishop Oscar Cruz has said that "the definite stand of the ordinary man is to uphold traditional values and Christian view" and "the vote will always go to those who will uphold traditional values."

Don't we all wish that such optimism would come true?

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Where are the bones of Bonifacio?

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

YESTERDAY, I found myself on a hill known as Nagpatong in Maragondon, Cavite. It is "officially" the place where Andres Bonifacio and his brother Procopio were executed by a team led by Lazaro Makapagal on May 10, 1897. I put the word "officially" in quotation marks because personally I don't think anyone really knows where the brothers Bonifacio were killed and buried. As a matter of fact, I believe that the so-called Bonifacio bones dug up in 1952 in the area now marked by the Philippines Historical Committee are not those of Andres Bonifacio. These bones were brought to Manila with much fanfare but they have disappeared since. I am sure these bones would not have withstood closer scrutiny. That is another story detailed in my book "Bones of Contention" (Anvil, 2001).

When I first visited Nagpatong seven years ago, I traveled on foot from Maragondon passing through a rickety suspension bridge, two streams and largely uninhabited terrain. It was a desolate place. The historical marker had been vandalized, covered with graffiti (of the type that goes "Loloy loves Mary" and "Bawal omehe deto").

Today, a dirt road makes the place accessible to tourists in cars. There are some scattered houses now, as well as a visible military presence in the area that suggests Nice People Around. Through the efforts of Maragondon Mayor Monte A. Andaman this place may yet see some development. A huge tableau by Toym Imao is rising on the site, changing the landscape we hope, for the better.

This development will surely spark some historical controversy. Worn-out questions will resurface like: Who was responsible for the death of Bonifacio? Who should rightfully be our National Hero?

If the monument will inspire patriotism, then it is worth all the trouble. But if it simply becomes another excuse to divide, another way to indulge in historical *sabong*, then it has no place anywhere in the Philippines.

What will be overlooked again is that our textbooks do not agree on the site of the execution of the Bonifacio brothers. Some books, following tradition, say they were executed on Mt. Buntis; others, towing the official line, say Mt. Nagpatong. I have no clear answer except that they were buried somewhere in this mountain range.

When I asked people to point out Buntis to me yesterday, I got the same vague answer as seven years ago. Nobody seems to know anything specific. From Nagpatong where we stood, Buntis was just a mountain away separated by Naputok. This is not a joke. The traditional names of the hills or mountains on the Maragondon range are very suggestive: Nagpatong, Naputok, Buntis and Hulog.

Until the National Historical Institute corrects history, as it did recently when it moved the site of the beginning of the Filipino-American War on Feb. 4, 1899 from a bridge in San Juan to a spot in Sta. Mesa, then we are stuck with Nagpatong. For whatever it is worth, I reproduce excerpts from a letter of Fr. Lupo Dumandan published in Taliba on Jan. 12, 1918 narrating the finding of the alleged Bonifacio bones on Nagpatong:

"In the town of Maragondon, Cavite, in a place called Hulog, on the hacienda of Jose Reyes, on the libis of a hill called Nagpatong and under the shade of an alibangbang tree, I found the burial place of the Supremo...I asked the residents of the area of the cause of death of the Supremo of the Katipunan. Some said that before the Spanish soldiers entered the town of Maragondon the revolutionaries took the wounded Supremo to the site I have mentioned, where he was shot and buried...

"Many people saw the Supremo...being carried in a hammock by two men because he was wounded....According to the people, Bonifacio was wounded in a battle that happened between the revolutionary soldiers...due to the delicacy [kaselanan] of my present state and due to my being a Catholic priest, I should not get involved in politics and in this way I am announcing the discovery of the skeleton of Andres Bonifacio so that those encouraging love of country can see if they should be moved to a place that is more fitting."

We now have many monuments to Bonifacio (and street names, too) all over the Philippines, among the most significant being that in Caloocan by National Artist Guillermo Tolentino (in the junction now popularly known as Monumento). There is another in bronze by National Artist Napoleon Abueva in Balintawak (the older statue in plaster, the one with white shirt and red pants, is now in front of Vinzon's Hall in UP Diliman]. Part of the mural by National Artist Carlos V. Francisco in Manila City Hall has Bonifacio leading his men to battle. There is also a sole figure of Bonifacio standing in front of the Manila Post Office, now the Liwasang Bonifacio, also by Guillermo Tolentino, and a rather tacky but striking three-dimensional tableau on Mehan Garden by the prolific Eduardo Castrillo who is sometimes mislabeled as a "National Artist." It is the Castrillo piece that spawned the one in Maragondon by Imao.

There will be more monuments to follow, and it is unfortunate that the remains of the Bonifacio brothers have not been found and given a proper burial. Till that day comes, let's hope historians and forensic doctors can piece together what happened to the Bonifacio brothers and why this happened.

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Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

'Sakit ng lalake'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I COULD have kicked myself. I was taking my lunch after delivering a plenary lecture at the Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (PSMID) when I realized I had forgotten to mention something very important: *"sakit ng lalake"* (men's diseases).

PSMID, which is composed of health professionals working in the area of communicable diseases, had invited me to speak about HIV/AIDS and STIs, with special focus on whether Filipinos had outgrown the stigma around these illnesses.

My answer to the question about stigma was an unequivocal no, pointing out that this stigma was in fact contributing to the spread of these STIs. I thought of sharing some of the points I made during my lecture to explain how this happens and will eventually get back to this point about *sakit ng lalake*.

Not in my home, please

I started out the lecture by presenting some figures from the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). I know this is the third column in which I'm mentioning that survey but that nationwide study conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), covering 13,000 women and 5,000 men, is a rich mine of information on many health issues.

The NDHS included several questions to measure people's knowledge about and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and STIs. One of the questions was this: "If a member of your family got infected with the virus that causes AIDS, would you want it to remain a secret?" Surprisingly, 76 percent of women and 79 percent of men replied, "No."

I was elated when I first saw that figure, thinking it meant Filipinos were now more ready to accept someone with HIV/AIDS. But my optimism faded quickly when I saw other responses in the survey. Asked if they would care, in their own household, for a relative with AIDS, only 34 percent of women and 29 percent of men answered, "Yes." And when asked if a female teacher with the AIDS virus should be allowed to continue teaching, only 14 percent of women and 11 percent of men said yes.

How do we explain these statistics? It seems that people feel that a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS shouldn't be kept a secret precisely because they fear the disease so much. The responses to the questions about caring for a relative or having an HIV-positive teacher suggest that people want to know who has HIV so they can keep away. The NDHS results show clearly that HIV/AIDS remains heavily stigmatized, to the extent that we would turn our backs on relatives with the disease.

Antibiotics and brake fluid

Although saddened, I was not surprised by the NDHS statistics. Our attitudes toward HIV/AIDS are a carry-over from the way we look at STIs in general. Even the older terms for these diseases—"venereal disease (VD)" and "sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)"—still elicit feelings of dread.

Among these STIs, HIV/AIDS is the most feared because it is seen as deadly and because of widespread misconceptions that it spreads easily. The NDHS in fact found that most of those surveyed still believe HIV/AIDS can be spread by mosquitoes, or by food shared with someone who is infected. (To set the record straight, HIV/AIDS is not spread through those routes. If it were, we'd have an even more deadly epidemic right now.)

But there's more to the fear of HIV/AIDS and STIs than misconceptions. The stigma around these diseases relate to the moralism that has emerged around these diseases. Too quickly, we presume that someone with STI is promiscuous, a term which Margy Holmes defines as anyone who has more sex partners than ourselves.

In the Philippines, the fear of STIs is a fear of women's sexuality, reflected in the widespread use of the term *"sakit ng babae"* (women's diseases) to refer to STIs. It isn't just any woman that's feared; specifically, it's "liberated" women, "liberated" here taken in its Filipino-English meaning to refer to someone who is "easy" with sex.

STIs are used to reinforce moralistic ideas that sex should be used only for reproduction and that outside of this purpose, it is dirty and dangerous. Discussions about STIs, like those about sex in general, are therefore driven underground. This only adds to the stigma so that when someone is infected, he will not go to a physician and resort to self-treatment with information gathered from the grapevine. The stuff used both for preventing and treatment of STIs is amazing, ranging from the newest antibiotics to brake fluid (yes, I got this from an interview with a taxi driver who argued that if it was powerful enough to stop a car, it should stop STIs as well).

So who's spreading STIs?

Filipino men are actually ambivalent about STIs. There's fear but there's also fatalism, even some attraction to the risks. When an infection does occur—as long as it is not HIV/AIDS—it may even be considered a badge of honor, something to boast about to the *barkada* (peer group).

The networks for treating STIs are more accessible to men because discussions about sex and STIs are less stigmatized (and because there is, to some extent, pride in being infected). Women, on the other hand, are unable to get the information they need because it's just not acceptable to talk about STIs with other women friends.

Women, in fact, may be aware that they are vulnerable because of a philandering husband, and yet would not dare to even suggest to their husbands that they use a condom for protection. The power relations are too skewed, which is why the theme around this year's World AIDS Day is "Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS," warning that the AIDS epidemic has now taken an alarming trend, where many women are being infected by their own husbands.

"It takes two to be monogamous" is a message I've kept repeating in my lectures. You might be faithful, but if your partner isn't, you're also at risk for STIs. And the risks are greater for women because, contrary to popular misconceptions, it is easier for men to infect women rather than the other way around. The reason is simple: women are the ones on the receiving end, so if her male partner has an STI, he literally deposits the infectious germs in her, and these stay on for several hours. The risks for women are further increased because the vagina is more prone to tearing and injuries during intercourse than the penis.

We can all contribute to removing the stigma around STIs through a more frank discussion of sex and sexuality, including the unequal relationships between men and women that fuel the spread of these diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

At the PSMID convention I asked for greater caution in our choice of words. I've always reacted strongly against the term "core transmitters," often used by AIDS organizations to refer to women sex workers. I did forget to appeal to the PSMID members to also stop using the term *"sakit ng babae,"* which tends to blame women for these diseases.

Should we now call these diseases *"sakit ng lalake"*? It's your call.

LETTERS

Valid concerns about AFP

THERE ARE concerns that the allegations of pervasive corruption in the Armed Forces of the Philippines are destroying the institution instead of exposing the "rogues in uniform." The concerns are valid and justified.

The calls to try Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia before a court martial were undoubtedly made on the assumption that military justice is swift and more stern and that a court martial is the logical venue considering that the defendant is a military officer.

However, the action that has been filed before the court martial is reportedly "for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." If found guilty, Garcia would be dismissed from the service. (He was effectively retired upon reaching the age of 56 on Nov. 18, 2004.)

It is distressing to note that the AFP can remain unperturbed with offenses—such as the one allegedly committed by Garcia—that partake of economic treason. (Not to mention the green card and loyalty issues.)

The officers of military organizations, more than any other professionals, are expected to live strictly by their code of chivalry. Certainly, the crime of which Garcia is accused is a violation that goes beyond mere chivalry. Limiting the charge against him to an issue of chivalry puts in question the competence of the judge advocate general, and raises suspicions of "brotherhood whitewash."

The AFP, as an institution, should not allow such doubts lest the public conclude that the AFP has also gone the errant ways of its corrupt officers.

The buck stops in the hands of the commander in chief. President Macapagal-Arroyo is on the dock.

—ALFREDO V. ASUNCION,
93 Castrillo St.,
Barangay Ugong Norte,
Quezon City

Whose interest is ERC protecting?

THE EVENT that we have feared in anticipation for some time has finally come to pass. The Manila Electric Co. has increased its rates again. (PDI, 11/09/04) Is the electricity business not a regulated industry? What is the regulator doing?

Our immediate take is that the Energy Regulatory Commission, whose mandate is to protect the interest of electricity consumers, has again put us down. Oblivious of—if at all it understands—its responsibility to the public, the ERC has time and again favored the giant utilities that have nothing in mind but to make huge profits at the expense of the already burdened consumers.

By law, the petitions or applications of utilities—e.g., the National Power Corp. and Meralco—that directly or indirectly affect the consumers must be submitted to the ERC for approval. As a matter of duty, the ERC must thoroughly review and exhaustively evaluate, through public hearings and consultations, these applications with the best interest of the consuming public utmost in its mind. But, notably, the public has been always at the losing end of the ERC's recent decisions. How much more if the decisions were reached without public consultations, which has happened several times?

We are tempted to conclude that the ERC is favoring the utilities. If these decisions are scrutinized, it will show that, more often than not, they are not a result of an extensive study. It seems that because of deadlines, issues and substance are sacrificed. The ERC's power to grant provisional authority is being abused to the detriment of the consuming public. This gives authority to the utilities to implement what it prays for while their applications are being heard.

The problem is while higher rates are being collected on provision, money immediately goes to the coffers of the utilities. If the application is disapproved—as what happened in a previous case involving Meralco—and a refund is ordered, the "credit to future bills by phase" is resorted to. This simply means that the refund will come from the consumer himself because the utilities refuse to refund the "over-collected" payments.

We think it is about time we reviewed the ERC's mandate. If it's going to take a long time, we will be content with changing the men at the helm.

—DR. BONIFACIO C. DAZO,
president,
Federation of Las Piñas Homeowners Association (Folpha),
50 C.V. Starr Ave.,
Philamlife Village,
Las Piñas City;
SIEGFRIEDO A. VELOSO,
president,
Federation of Village Associations,
Don Jesus Blvd.,
Clubhouse,
Alabang Hills Village,
Muntinlupa City

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Per DTI-NCR Perms No. 1515 Series of 2004

Signs of backward logic

I AM a frequent user of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX). I have seen its tremendous improvement, particularly the asphalt pavement which makes your ride very smooth. However, during one of my trips to Manila, I noticed something which to me is very odd.

Emergency telephone booths have been installed along the expressway, approximately spaced at one kilometer at the most from each other. Oddly, 500 meters after each telephone booth, there is a signage with an arrow pointing backwards, as if to tell a motorist that if he needed to use a phone he could back his car 500 meters. I do not see the logic of these signs. Remember the NLEX is an expressway on which vehicles run at very high speed.

Wouldn't it be more logical to tell motorists that 500 meters ahead is a telephone? Then if some motorists are in need of a telephone, say, to report an accident, then it would be easier for them to find one.

Further, the signs should have been placed at an angle of 10-15 degrees to the motorist's line of sight for easier visibility. But they are parallel to the expressway, which does not lend to easy reading for motorists who are concentrated on driving. Safety should also have been considered when the signs were installed.

—BRICCIO HULIGANGA,
Barangay Guesset,
Naguilian, La Union,
brix_huliganga@yahoo.com

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
ABC
Tuwing Huwebes, 10:00pm

I-text ang inyong "fearless view" sa 2910. Pipiliin namin ang pinakamagaling na sagot. Ang premyo linggo-linggo: **Isang 21" color TV set!**

I-type: INQTV <ang inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, tapos ipadala sa 2910. Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 6 PM. Winner will be identified during the InqTV program: Thursday, 10:00pm, on ABC.

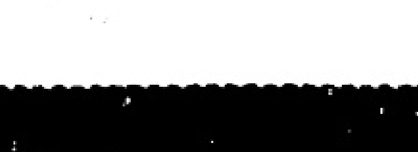
text 2910

Papasang buo ang pork barrel. Naloko ba tayo?

Narito ang ilan sa mga sagot ninyo. Text na!

"dapat magtiwala tau sa ka2yahan ng mga hinalal natin.d naman lahat may masamang balak.dapat ang bwat isa sa tin mag2lungan"
Lolita Escudero, Muntinlupa City

"di tu nloko drinamahan lng tu cla ang loko2 ."
Nelson Pamplona, Zambales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InqBox

Question of the Week

Christmas is just around the corner. Do you feel the spirit of the season? Why or why not?

Senders of d first 10 texts publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wiL each receiv an *Inquirer T-shirt!!U*

Key in inquirer news name/city/message, Text your answer to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
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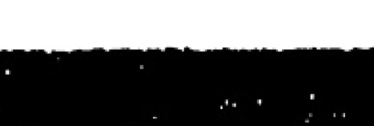

Shots signaled burst of floodwaters

By Ruth L. Navarra

WHEN a series of gunshots were heard in the middle of "Krystala," the residents of Sitio Saba in Montalban, Rizal, knew that it was not a good sign.

Twelve-year-old Pilbert Ramos and his family saw the water and quickly climbed to their rooftop. Neighbors followed suit because the house of the Ramoses was higher than those of their neighbors.

He could not recall the exact number of people who were with him but he remembered his Auntie Paring, Aunt Bobot, his brother Gilbert and his wife Rina, and his other brother John.

Pilbert also remembered his neighbors Felipe and his wife Crosynthia, Nelson and his wife Lita, his playmate JR Mañera and his father Rustom.

For the nearly one hour they were stranded on the rooftop, he said that they were not talking. But he knew that they were praying quietly. He said that he dared not ask God for anything but he did recite the Hail Mary.

His Kuya Gilbert put Pilbert on the trunk of a banana plant beside the house, while his Ate Rina gave him her shirt so they could tie his hands around its trunk. They were not prepared at all when the unexpected water from the Wawa Dam washed over them.

He saw how the water carried relatives and neighbors. That was the last time he saw them. The trunk floated and he clung to it for almost three hours.

Pilbert said he did not feel afraid. In fact, he felt nothing. All he was thinking about was to get out of the water as soon as possible.

Rescuers

He could not remember much but he saw how the rescuers ran after him. The next thing he knew, he was being fished out of the water by Cesar Resare and was given dry clothes.

It was 12:52 a.m. and they found him in Barangay Industrial Valley Complex, Marikina City. He was temporarily sheltered at H. Bautista Elementary School, which had been turned into an evacuation center.

He was brought to Amang Rodriguez Hospital and was about to be released to the Department of Social and Welfare Development at around noon yesterday after they found nothing wrong with him. Two of his relatives found him at the hospital.

After they got him settled, they left him at the hospital in the care of nurses and the parents of his bedmates because they also had to look for their other relatives.

His small frame seemed to shrink because of his oversized clothes. He was waiting for his mother who promised to be there with him before night time.

Fighting back tears

He could not talk about his brothers and sister without fighting back the tears. He would look at the blank walls. Then he scratched his eyes and cried.

There were canned goods by his bedside and the nurse had just delivered his supper—pinakbet, *adobong manok* and rice.

He had barely eaten lunch but he said that he was not hungry. The only nutrients that got into his system came through a plastic tube.

IN THE KNOW

PHILIPPINE Area of Responsibility (PAR) is an area enclosed by imaginary lines on the Philippine Tropical Cyclone Tracking Map and measured in terms of latitude and longitude. The lines are located approximately 700 kilometers north of Aparri, 1,000 km east of Eastern Visayas, 100 km south of General Santos, and 5 km west of Puerto Princesa. *PDI Research*

SOURCE: PAGASA

Effects of 7 destructive typhoons out of 23 from January to November '04

No. of destructive typhoons:	7
Families affected:	856,296
Persons affected:	2,130,509
Dead:	254
Injured:	260
Missing:	106
No. of houses damaged:	
Total	39,707
Partial	161,736
Damages to property:	
Agricultural	P3.44 B
Infrastracture	P2.28 B
Private	P117.48 B

SOURCE: OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE

Typhoon alert: 'Yoyong' to hit all of Luzon

From page A1

zon, but would be concentrated on the border of Region 3 and 4."

"So let us just pray that Typhoon Yoyong will change its course," he said.

He said that if Yoyong would maintain its current course and speed, "the local governments will have to decide when to declare a state of emergency" in their respective localities.

On alert

Cruz said he had already placed the military, police and Coast Guard units on alert along the path of the incoming howler.

Yoyong would be the fourth typhoon to strike since Nov. 14 when Unding battered Camarines Sur and Mindoro Oriental, killing several people.

Unding was followed by Violeta, which hit Aurora province, also on the eastern coastline of Luzon, and by Tropical Depression Winnie, which has killed more than 200 people.

Vice President Noli de Castro, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman and Defense Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina flew by helicopter to Infanta to check on the extent of the damage.

Supertyphoon?

"They could not land, so they diverted to Palayan City, Nueva Ecija," Cruz said, adding that roads to Palayan had been cut off due to floods.

Appeal to media

Cruz also appealed to media to provide information about people stranded on rooftops so they could be rescued by government teams.

Initial information from the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration gave Yoyong's position at 1,530 km east-southeast of the Visayas as of 2 p.m. yesterday afternoon.

Pagasa said it had strengthened into a typhoon and even accelerated its west-northwest movement toward the archipelago. *With a report from Norman Bordadera*

"Wish ko lang...

na kung maipasa na ang panukalang batas ukol sa buwis, sana'y ilaan ang bahagi nito sa pagtulong sa mahihirap na estudyanteng tulad namin."

"Masisipag at matiyagang magturo ang mga guro sa pampublikong paaralan na aming pinapasukan. Ngunit nakalulungkot po na hindi kayang punuan ng kanilang sipag at tiyaga ang mga kakulangan sa pampublikong edukasyon. Gaya ng sapat na dami ng guro, silya at mga aklat, at mga makabagong kagamitan tulad ng computer at educational television. Hirap na nga po kami sa mga personal na gastos sa pag-aaral at kahit sa pamasahe at allowance. Kayat malaking tulong po sa mahihirap na estudyanteng tulad namin ng kapatid kong si Jel kung mabibigyan ng sapat na gamit at pasilidad ang mga pampublikong paaralan"

JANETH G. GALLEGO

Dalawa lang sina Janeth at Jel sa kay daming estudyante ng mga pampublikong paaralan na nangangailangan ng mas malaking suporta ng gobyerno. Dagdag na pondo ang kailangan upang magkaroon ng disenteng gusali, sapat na dami ng guro at nararapat na mga pasilidad ang mga paaralang ito.

Higit na matutulungan ang mga pampublikong paaralan at mahihirap na estudyanteng gaya nina Janeth at Jel kung lalaki ang kita ng gobyerno. Narito ang mga maaari nating gawin upang makatulong:

- Labanan ang pagnanakaw sa kabang bayan
- Agad tayong magbayad ng tamang buwis
- Humingi ng resibo sa ating mga binibili.
- At suportahan ang mga panukalang batas para sa dagdag na kita ng pamahalaan.

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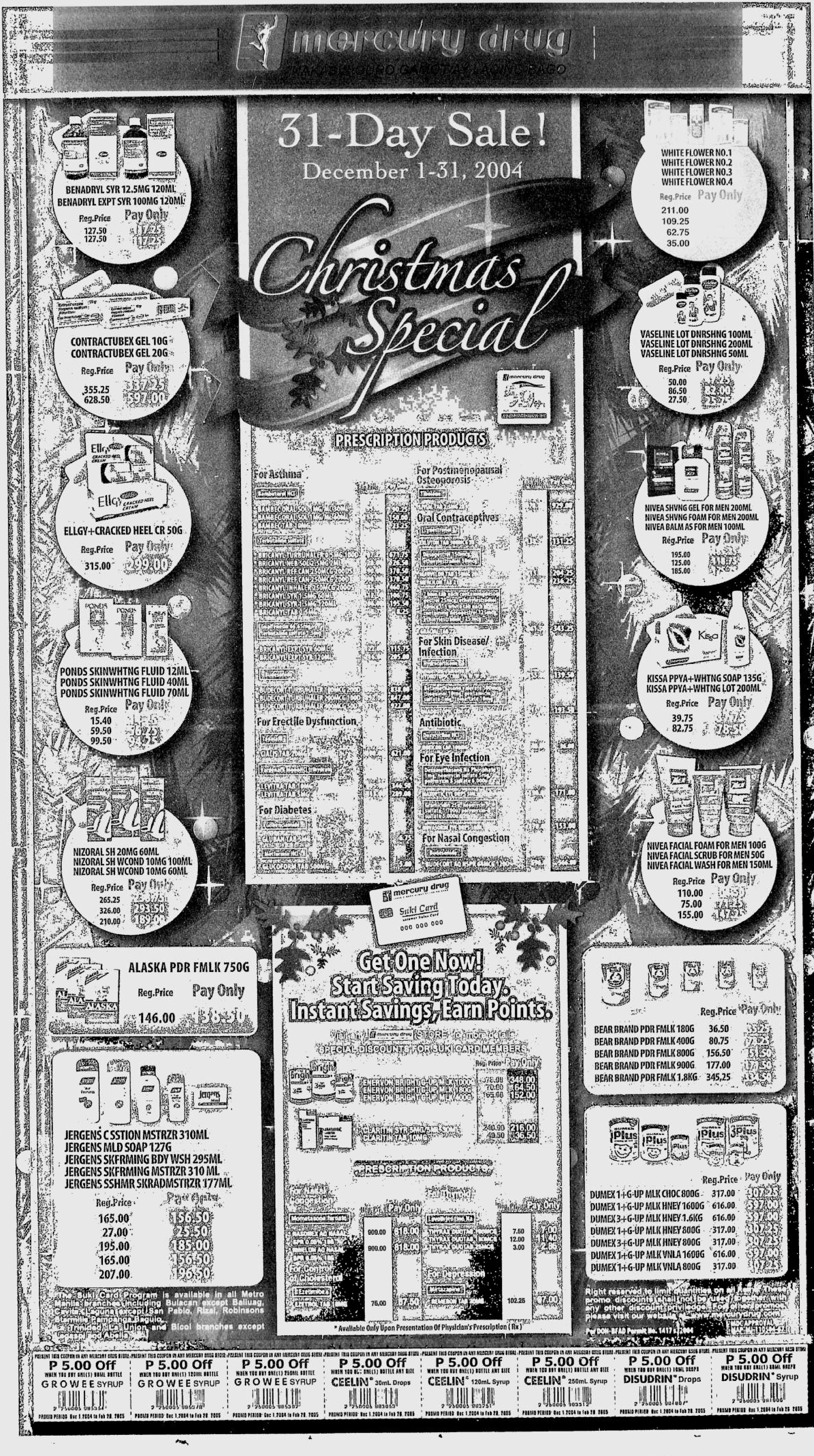

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KISSA PPYA+WHTNG LOT 200ML	82.75	78.50

	Reg.Price	Pay Only
NIVEA FACIAL FOAM FOR MEN 100G	110.00	[illegible]
NIVEA FACIAL SCRUB FOR MEN 50G	75.00	[illegible]
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Bacolod declared cholera 'hot spot'

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The Regional Epidemiology Center of the Department of Health in Western Visayas yesterday declared a cholera alert situation in Negros Occidental and placed this city on "hot spot status" in the wake of the rising number of cases of the water-and-food-borne disease in the province.

Dr. Jessie Glenn Alonsabe, the regional epidemiologist, said investigators confirmed 27 cases of cholera in Bacolod and four cases in Negros Occidental, and two deaths.

"This is not an outbreak situation, we are putting up a warning to prevent it," Alonsabe clarified.

Provincial Health Officer Luisa Efren yesterday said from Sept. 1 to Nov. 20, they have recorded 84 suspected cholera cases, including the confirmed cholera cases in Bacolod and one case each in the cities of Kabankalan and Victorias and Bago and in the town of Murcia.

The Institute of Tropical Medicine was still validating the other suspected cholera cases, she said.

The two fatalities that were reported in Bago and Victorias cities were both found to have eaten contaminated food while they were in Bacolod.

She said the cases of cholera and suspected cholera in the city had mostly involved residents living in coastline areas.

Cholera is commonly caused by eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with the bacteria called *vibria cholerae*. It infects the intestines, causing diarrhea, vomiting and leg cramps.

The bacteria is transmitted by eating food or drinking water contaminated with human waste, a DOH health advisory said.

The DOH advised the public to avoid cholera by drinking only potable water or boiling drinking water for three minutes; keeping food away from insects and rats by covering it; washing and cooking food properly; to properly dispose human waste; washing hands with soap after using the toilet and before eating, and keeping surroundings clean to prevent flies and other insects and rodents from breeding.

The diarrhea and vomiting brought on by the infection leaves the body without enough fluid and the ensuing dehydration and shock can kill a person within hours.

If an infected person is given fluids immediately after the first symptoms show up, the disease can be completely cured. Simple water won't do, however. A mixture of sugar and certain salts that the body needs must be mixed with clean water and drunk in large amounts.

School execs sued for ₱1.3-M fund scam

BAGUIO CITY—Parents of 2,300 students enrolled at the Benguet National High School (BNHS) have sued their principal and two teachers for allegedly defrauding their organization of P1.3 million in illegally collected parents-teachers association funds.

The amount should not have even been collected, according to Francis Gonzalo, president of the Parents, Teachers and Community Organization Inc. (PTCO). He traced some of the money to this year's school expenditures, raising issues about the school's financial health.

Remedios Taguba, Cordillera director of the Department of Education (DepEd), investigated Cerila Taynan, BNHS principal, and Andy Villamor and Elsie Paulan, both teachers, after noting the complaints that they refused to divulge how the money was solicited in October.

But the three officials denied the charges.

Denials

Taynan said she never authorized the collection. Paulan, who acted as PTCO bookkeeper, said in her affidavit that her obligations to PTCO did not involve disbursing or collecting funds from the students.

While denying his participation in the alleged fraud, Villamor in his affidavit said the organization elected him as assistant treasurer even after a DepEd circular prevented teachers from participating in any financial transactions of parents-teachers associations.

"We have learned that (for school year 2003 to 2004), without authority from the PTCO and using the PTCO, the school officials collected P660 (from every) student. Thus the organization was able to collect P1,383,987.19," Gonzalo said in his complaint.

"At that time, collection was made by school officials. Likewise, disbursements and the use of (the P1.3 million) were made by Villamor, Paulan and Taynan," he added.

However, the officials did not respond to a Sept. 23 letter filed by a lawyer of the PTCO, which tried to secure validated disbursement records that would explain how the funds were used.

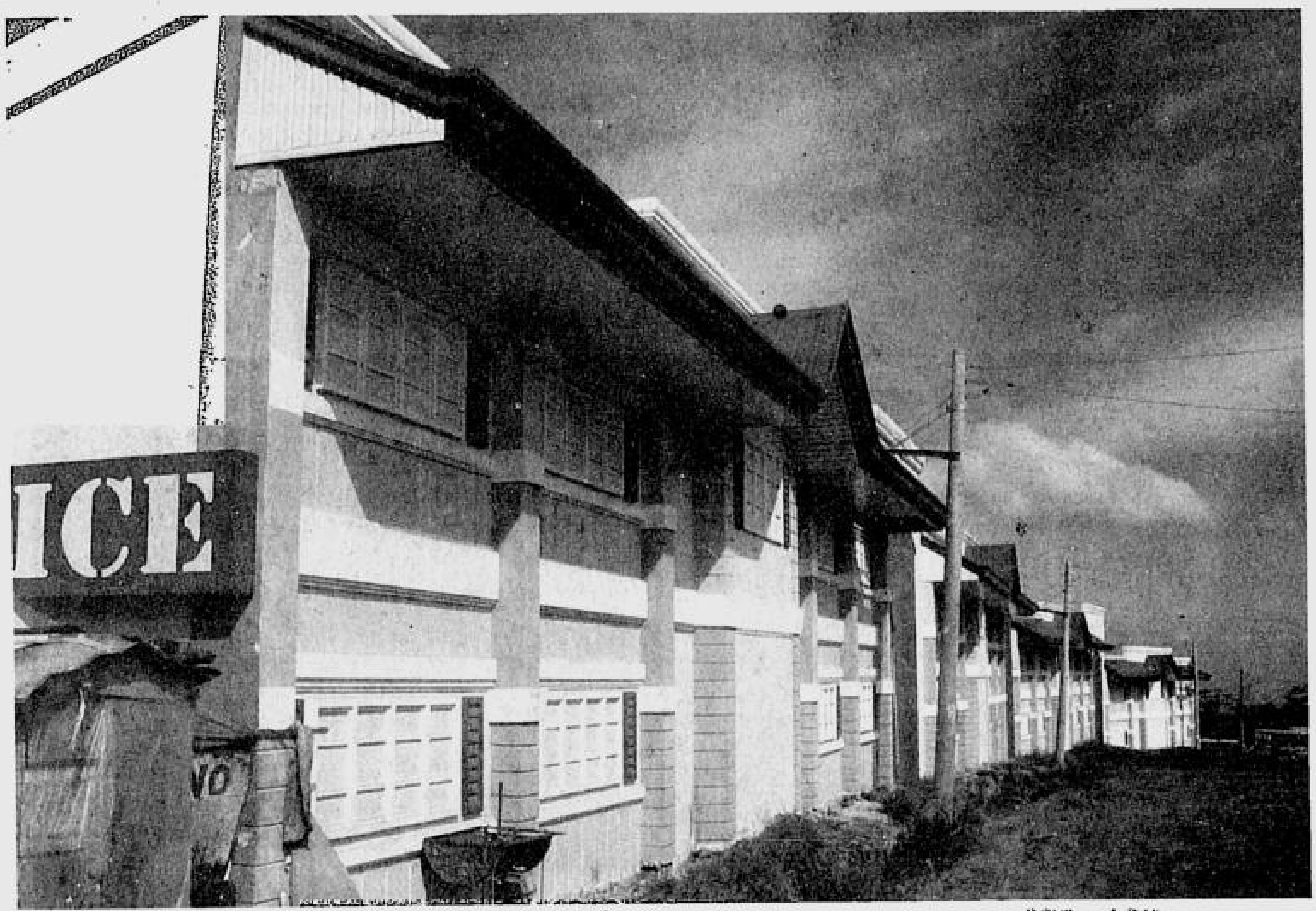
Expenses

Gonzalo said "some of the funds were used to cover expenses of the school, which we believed to have been covered by the maintenance and other operating expenditures funds released to each school."

He told Taynan in an Aug. 24 letter that PTCO was asking for government records because the money in question, while "private in nature," had become public funds when government teachers collected and disbursed them.

Gonzalo said the money must now "undergo the usual government auditing laws, rules and regulations," because "the funds used are PTCO-sanctioned fees collected by government employees using the coercive power of the school and disbursed by a chosen few government employees."

A copy of the PTCO financial report indicated that the P1.3 million subsidized the school papers "Ang Bahaghari" and "Strawberry Fields," was used to buy school supplies, and paid for the honoraria of teachers as well as the band instructor, the security contractor and the utility workers. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau


DELFIN MALLARI/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

FAÇADE: Somewhere in Tagaytay City rises what appears to be a row of townhouses. But behind this façade is a market which the pretty infrastructure, actually hollow inside, tries to hide from public view.

Mindoro folk protest entry of nickel mine firm

VICTORIA, Oriental Mindoro—Residents of this province held a rally to protest the operations of a nickel mining company that the protesters said was environmentally destructive.

At least 5,000 residents gathered to demand a stop to the operations of the Aglubang-Mining Crew Minerals (Aglubang-Crew).

Last March, the Office of the President overturned a 2001 decision of former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez revoking the mineral profit sharing agreement given to Aglubang-Crew.

Aglubang-Crew plans to mine nickel in 9,720 hectares in Villa Cerveza, Victoria town and Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro.

Alvarez, however, canceled its MPSA on July 16, 2001 because of the "great damage it would bring to Mindoro island" and its social unacceptability.

In a statement, the Alyansa Laban sa Mina (Alamin), the rally's organizer, said: "Before the presidential election, Malacañang came out with a resolution, which, according to Aglubang-Crew, revokes the cancellation of its MPSA and allegedly allowed it to resume mining at the watershed in the mountains of Victoria."

Among the grounds for opposition cited by Alamin are loss of ancestral lands; threat to the presence of tamaraws, which are almost extinct; destruction of the Mag-asawang Tubig, which irrigates several lands; contamination of Naujan Lake which fishers from 24 barangays of Victoria, Pola, Naujan and Socorro depend on for their living; dumping of mine tailings in Pinamalayan and Pola towns.

"We call on the Arroyo administration to heed the decision and voice of the people of Oriental Mindoro," said Alamin.

In a letter sent to Alamin, MiningWatch Canada said it was dismayed that Crew Resources from Canada would "force a nickel mine on the people of Mindoro."

Aglubang-Crew lawyer Ben delos Reyes said Mindoro and the national government would benefit more from the project as it will create employment and infrastructure.

He also challenged the protesters to be as vigilant as they are today when the project is being implemented in order to allay all their fears. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Town hit by gastro declares calamity

CEBU CITY—The municipality of Moalboal has declared itself in a state of calamity after the town was struck by a gastroenteritis outbreak that killed two people and took ill at least 256 people.

The municipal council, upon the prodding of Mayor Inosentes Cabaron, passed a resolution during a special session yesterday declaring all the town's 15 barangays in a state of calamity.

The declaration would enable the local government to release its calamity fund for the victims, Cabaron said.

Vice Mayor Felix Pocong Jr., who presided over the emergency session yesterday, said each of the victims was assured of a P2,000 assistance, half of which would come from the municipal government and another half from the provincial government.

Pocong said the release of the money would be through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) offices of the town and province.

Pocong said the families of the two fatalities would get bigger amounts. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

GMA adviser sees no obstacle to pact with MILF

PIKIT, North Cotabato—An adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed confidence a peace agreement would be signed with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saying there are no more contentious issues blocking a pact.

Teresita Deles, adviser on the peace process, said the issues being discussed by the two panels, including ancestral domain, were not difficult to resolve.

She said adherence of both sides to the ceasefire agreement has also contributed to the strengthening of the peace process.

There has been no major clash between the military and the MILF in recent months.

Asked when the much-anticipated peace talks would resume, Deles said the government has not received any word from Kuala Lumpur yet.

The Malaysian government, which has been hosting the peace negotiations, has been mum on the schedule of the talks but some government officials and rebel leaders said it could resume early next year.

Deles said what is important is that both sides continue communicating.

Maj. Gen. Dato' Zulkifeli Bin Mohamad Zin, head of the 60-man International Monitoring Team (IMT), said the peace efforts by the residents and peace advocates were also helping the peace process.

"It's been very good and we talk about peace all the time," said Zulkifeli.

In Cotabato City, a ranking Army official said the military has continued its operation against Abu Sayyaf bandits recently monitored in some parts of Central Mindanao.

"We will not stop tracking them down with the help of our MILF friends," Maj. Gen. Raul Relano, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said.

In Davao City, peace advocates coming from different countries gathered for a six-day forum on globalization and war.

Bishop Felixberto Calang, convenor of the Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao (InPeace), said the forum, dubbed as the First People's Forum on Peace for Life, started yesterday and will culminate on Dec. 5.

The gathering was organized by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). Calang said InPeace and the Mindanao Interfaith Peoples Conference (MIPC) were the event's official host. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, Charlie Señase and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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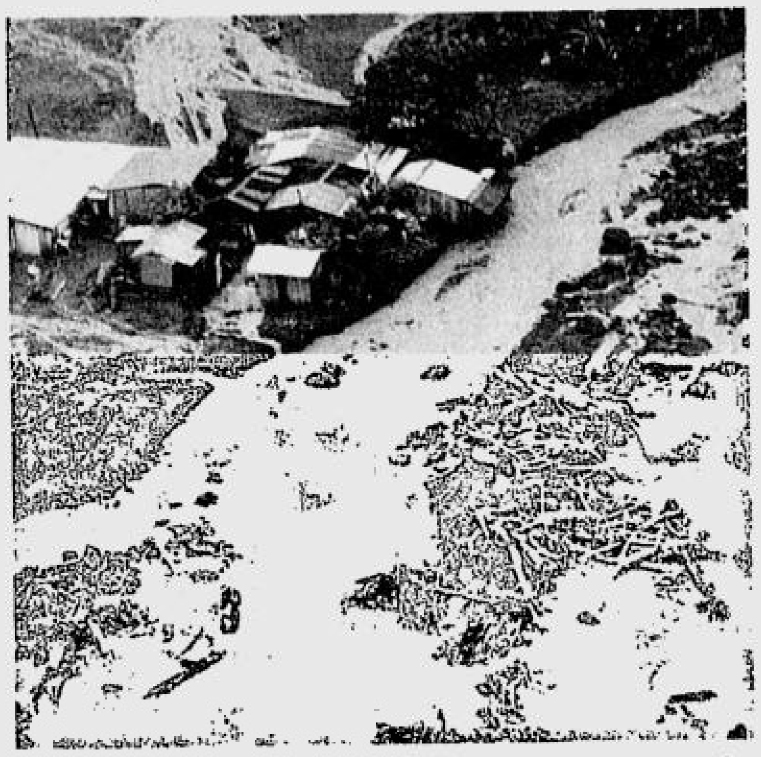
Nature's wake-up call in Dingalan



AERIAL photo of the coastline of Dingalan, Aurora, in the aftermath of Typhoon "Violeta." PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE PHOTO

By Tonette Orejas
Dingalan, Aurora

SAVE for a loud bang heard from atop Mount Mingan, a rapid avalanche of logs, boulders and thick mud about 15 foot high rolled down with hardly any warning onto Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora, at 5:40 a.m. on Nov. 23.

The landslide, which changed course twice but kept on cutting through the village, gobbled up everything on its path, including people jolted from sleep.

Before noon, the death toll reached 15 people. By Friday, Nov. 26, it was 29, including those from Barangay Dikapanikian.

Shaken by the disaster, the residents asked: Was this the wrath of Typhoon "Violeta"? Or was this the result of almost nine decades of commercial logging?

LAST Saturday, Fatima Rotaquio, 34, buried all of her four children and her mother, Maxima de la Cruz.

The ordeal she underwent—tumbling with the debris, being battered by rocks and clinging on to life from a branch where her wristwatch slung—was by no means little, she said, compared to the grief she felt on the day her children—Joseph, 14, Jessica, 12, Jenica, 9, and Jaymark, 7—were buried.

"I don't know how to start again," she said, as she slumped on a church pew to rest a swollen right leg. The huge scar on her left cheek made eating her first meal for the day painful.

It was almost 5 p.m. and she said she was resigned to the fact that the church at Dingalan's poblacion would be home for her and husband Jesus that night, "and until God knows when."

"I lost my kids and I lost my house. What kind of life is this?" she asked.

From another corner of the church, the weeping had not stopped. The relatives of six other people buried on that same day wondered why their families had to endure such a tragedy.

Fr. Antonio Evangelio, the town's parish priest who led the burial rites, said there was one clear answer to questions on the cause of the disaster: Logging.

"Nature has its own way of fighting back," Evangelio said.

"*Dinudukot-dukot ang kahoy du'n* (Trees are stolen there)," he said, referring to that part of Mingan that eroded and swamped the foothills of Paltic.

"Two trucks by two sawmills were trapped in Paltic. One is owned by a certain Gatdula. Logging is happening with the knowledge of officials. *May sabwatan* (There is connivance), whether logging is illegal or legal around Paltic," he said.

Some public officials, like Mayor Jaime Ylarde, the priest said, maintain sawmills at the compound of the logging company Green Circle Properties and Resources (GCPR) in Barangay Umiray "to make (their logging businesses) look legal."

Denials

The INQUIRER tried to get GCPR's reactions to Evangelio's claims but failed because the route to the company's compound was impassable.

Ylarde is firm on one point. "There are no illegal loggers here," he said.

Asked what he does for a living, the mayor said: "*Di ako nagkakahoy* (I'm not into logging)."

Some residents were angry when they heard Ylarde on national television blaming charcoal-makers and *kaingineros* (slash and burn farmers) for the incident.

"He blames anyone but himself," a municipal employee said.

According to the Dingalan-based Integrated Rural Development Foundation (IRDF), "*kaingin* farmers occupy only 2,267.21 hectares of land as compared to the 18,798.80 hectares being exploited by commercial logging."

"How can (Ylarde) say there's no logging when there's *tablon* (lumber)? I saw them floating. They were hauled at 1 a.m. on Friday. Logging can't be done without the connivance of leaders," the employee said.

Several residents claimed illegal loggers also used the sawmills of two firms near Paltic.

The sawmills, logging concessions and DENR checkpoints belied what President Macapagal-Arroyo believed all along and which she confirmed to the INQUIRER during her Saturday visit here: That a logging ban stays in Aurora.

GCPR is said to have breathed a new life on the logging industry that began in the 1930s in Dingalan.

"Since GCPR started its logging operations (in 2000) illegal loggers sprouted almost everywhere—many of whom are said to be paying royalties to GCPR since they use GCPR's license when transporting lumber from Dingalan to Metro Manila or other provinces," the IRDF said.

The logging firm Inter-Pacific Resource Corp., the foundation noted, also "started operating its sawmill after 'arrangements' were done with GCPR and local environmental officials. IPRC's concession was covered by the 1995 log ban. The operation of its sawmill now is not covered by an environmental clearance certificate."

The basic information for regulatory work also escaped Ylarde.

In a town with 22,000 residents in 11 villages, Ylarde, a former vice mayor, said he did not know the number of registered chainsaws. He, however, said he knew two holders of lumber dealing permits, but he did not identify them.

Meliton Vicente Jr., who assumed the post of community environment and natural resources officer in September, identified them as Gatdula and Eduardo Sevilla. Information on the volume of lumber produced in the town is being gathered, he said.

Watershed spared?

Vicente said logging, illegal or otherwise, never took place at the Dingalan watershed forest reserve, the only one of nine throughout the town that had been so declared by then President Fidel Ramos. Paltic sits below this watershed in Mingan.

"It has been spared. It is thickly forested," Vicente said, citing the DENR's integrated social forestry (ISF) projects in Paltic and far up, in the village of Davil-Davilan.

The task of safeguarding the ISF projects is, however, part of the devolved functions of the local government, he said.

"Illegal logging may be happening but not within these areas," Vicente said.

Still, the ISF status indicated that these forests used to be logged or cultivated until 1995 when the DENR intervened to protect them.

Faults

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau traced the disaster to geological hazards, mainly the movements of the Philippine Fault. Smaller faults, it said, had weakened the soil on the hill overlooking Paltic.

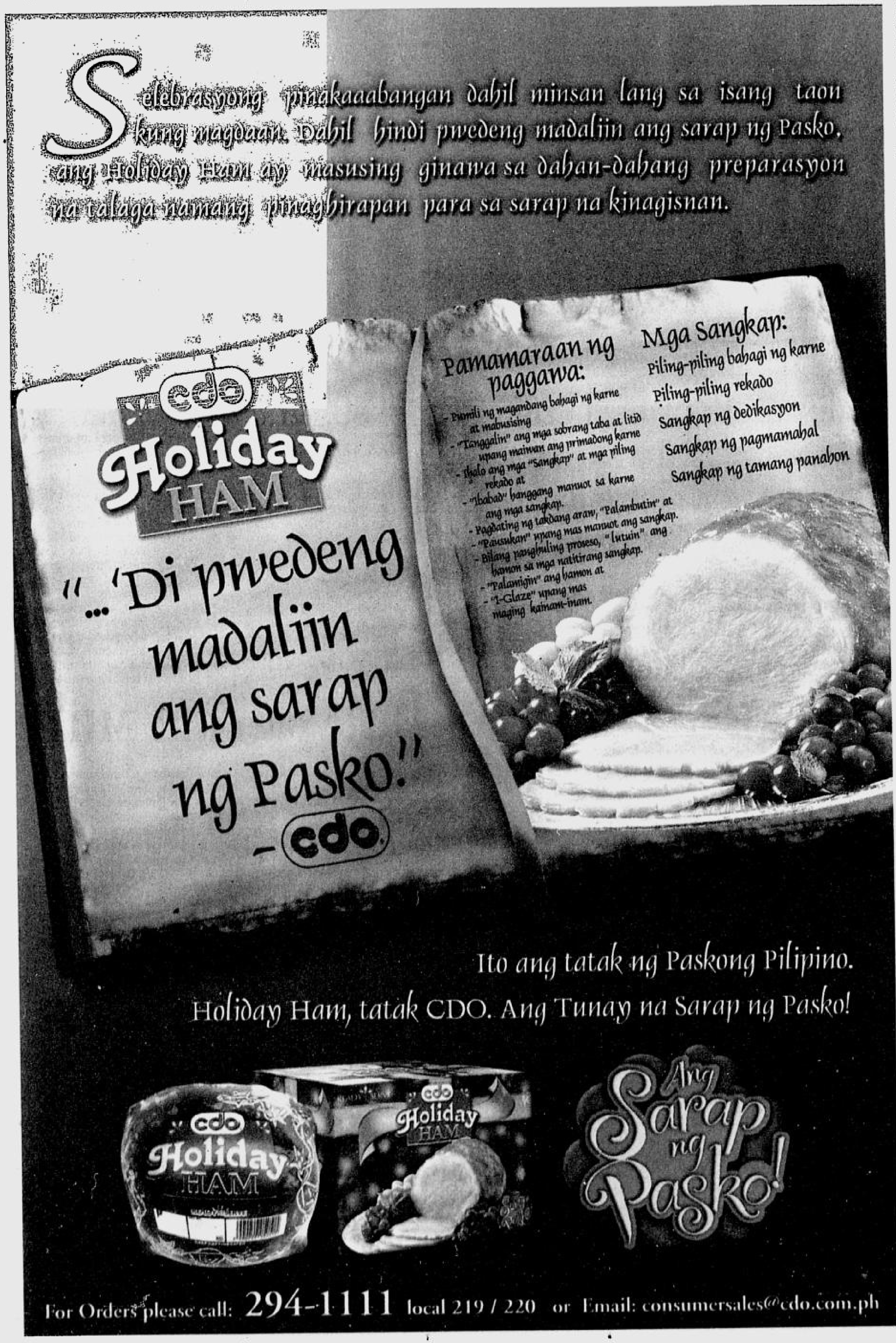
On Saturday and viewed from the poblacion, at least nine portions of Mingan were visibly eroded, the long brown patches like wounds to a green arch separating Dingalan from the nearby town of San Luis.

As Dingalan comes to term with, or its officials refuse to confront, the real cause of the disaster, it may help to be reminded of the poor state of the town's forests.

In 1991, a survey by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority showed that out of a total area of 28,980 ha, only 437 ha remained of old growth dipterocarp forest.

The residual forest stood at 16,591 ha. The sub-marginal forest shrunk to 1,031 ha, while the brush land and grassland grew to 4,191 ha.

For Evangelio, lives matter most. Nature, he said, already gave the cue for a re-evaluation of how Dingalan officials and residents treat the forests.



Selebrasyong pinakaaabangan dahil minsan lang sa isang taon kung magdaan. Dahil hindi pwedeng madaliin ang sarap ng Pasko, ang Holiday Ham ay masusing ginawa sa dahan-dahang preparasyon na talaga namang pinaghirapan para sa sarap na kinagisnan.

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WORLD AIDS DAY

Housewives, maids not spared from AIDS, says DOH study

By Blanche S. Rivera
and Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

MORE women in the home, particularly housewives and maids in the Philippines, are infected with HIV/AIDS, the Department of Health said yesterday.

Contrary to previous pronouncements that HIV infection was spread by commercial sex workers and overseas Filipino workers, recent data showed that women involved in intimate relationships were not spared from the virus, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said.

Citing statistics from a study of the last 200 HIV cases in the National HIV Registry, Dayrit said women accounted for 28 percent of new HIV cases. Of this, 50 percent were housebound and 48 percent were working.

Most of the housebound infected women were either housewives or local domestic helpers. Women aged 30 to 39 registered the highest HIV prevalence in the country among women.

"We can say it's a sign of sexual permissiveness or promiscuity where people are probably jumping into bed with anyone they are attracted to. Some are probably married women who are bored in their marriages or with their partners and are playing the field," Dayrit said in a press conference at the DOH office in Manila yesterday.

"If you're not into commercial sex and you're not an injecting drug user, then you must be getting your infection from your intimate relations," he added.

No to multiple sex partners

DOH data showed that 70 percent of infections transmitted through sexual contact were heterosexual, 21 percent homosexual and 9 percent bisexual.

While HIV incidence among housebound women had increased, men were still the majority of the latest 200 cases, representing 72 percent. Those aged 20 to 29 registered the highest prevalence.

The latest 200 cases included teachers, nurses, welders, barbers, mechanics and businessmen.

"The pattern may be changing already... It's diffusing into the population as we're seeing more cases in different occupational groups and older age groups, where there's more sexual permissiveness," Dayrit said.

"In the early 1990s, HIV spread through commercial sex workers. Previously, we also said it's from OFWs, but that's not the picture now... You may get HIV from a partner who has had multiple sex contact," he added.

HIV epidemic?

The health chief has come under attack for the government's refusal to buy contraceptives while urging sexually active couples to use condoms as protection from HIV/AIDS. He, however, said this was not a general recommendation.

The Philippines, whose HIV prevalence has been described as "low and slow," has 2,165 reported HIV/AIDS cases since the first case was reported in 1984.

In his press statement, Dayrit admitted that the rising number of women getting infected indicated a threat of an HIV epidemic in the country.

"We have all the factors brewing for an explosion, and the current pace of responses might not be enough to contain HIV/AIDS in the future," he said.

"To make the greatest impact, care and support programs for the HIV-positive community as well as focused HIV/AIDS prevention interventions among vulnerable populations should be the priority in the next five years," Dayrit added.

Flower condoms

Meanwhile, the Baguio AIDS Watch Council (Awac), as well as private AIDS prevention groups will be distributing information materials about AIDS today.

They will also sell artificial flowers made of condoms, the proceeds of which will benefit at least six persons with AIDS in Baguio City.

Although safe sex is essential to the prevention of AIDS, Awac does not aggressively promote the use of condoms.

"As one educated in a Catholic medical school, I would rather help guide the morals of the public," said Dr. Charles Cheng, president of Baguio Awac, a group of private and government health experts and non-government organizations advocating AIDS prevention.

Cheng was referring to the Catholic Church's and other Christian groups' position that AIDS can be prevented if people have sex within the bounds of marriage.

Best protection

Cheng and Baguio City health officials, however, conceded that despite the Church's position, there were people who would patronize commercial sex workers who could be infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as AIDS.

For these people, the condom would still be the best protection.

According to Dr. Celia Flor Brillantes of Baguio health department's hygiene clinic, the city has 3,500 registered entertainers, many of whom are commercial sex workers. There are also 300 "freelancers" or unregistered street hookers.

Brillantes said commercial sex workers in Baguio go for a health check-up every six months and if deemed "clean," are given pink cards.

She added that her clinic offers free testing for syphilis and HIV for the whole month of December, which is World Aids Month.

Maria Melissa Domingo of the Health Advocacy for Gender Development and Sexuality (HANDS) said her group would soon monitor "freelancers" or unregistered commercial sex workers.

Garlic and acupuncture

Awac's Cheng is currently experimenting with garlic and acupuncture as alternative treatments for AIDS.

"Ancient Chinese medicine and even the Bible regard garlic as a wonder drug which increases the body's immunity against many diseases," he said.

Cheng and his colleagues are working on establishing a "CD4 count baseline."

CD4 or T-lymphocytes (also called T-cells) which the HIV attacks, are the anti-bodies which fight infection.

Cheng said if their experiment succeeds, garlic, which can be bought in capsule form over-the-counter, as well as acupuncture, could be cheaper alternatives to the current therapy against AIDS which costs between P35,000 and P40,000 a month per patient.

Let's get this straight, gays dare guys

From page A1

Contestants will take part in Altermale 2004, the first-ever beauty and personality contest for "straight-looking" gay men. It has a colorful highlight: During the pageant, gay contestants will ask sexually active "macho" men to take the AIDS test challenge.

"It's like one-upmanship (between gays and heterosexual men) in the prevention and control of the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS," said Vincent Mendoza, vice president of Altermale Association, organizer of the pageant.

The event is meant to challenge gay and heterosexual men to get tested for the disease.

The Philippines, whose HIV prevalence has been described as "low and slow" has 2,165 reported HIV/AIDS cases since the first case was reported in 1984.

Wandering eye

"While we agree that taking the AIDS test is a personal decision, we feel that encouraging our fellow gays—and most especially straight males with a wandering eye—to take the AIDS test," Mendoza said at the press launch of the beauty contest yesterday.

Altermale president Dale Marpa announced that his group was inviting 19 straight men to take the AIDS test challenge posed by their 19 gay contestants, aged 20 to 29 years old.

"We have 19 gay candidates, so we need 19 straight males. We are also seeking the assistance and support of Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and other anti-AIDS nongovernment organizations and foundations for free AIDS testing," Marpa said.

Mendoza said a contest, like Altermale 2004, was a unique way of reaching out to more gays.

'Late is too late'

"The activity is fun, non-threatening, and emphasizes peer bonding instead of peer pressure, when dealing with the sensitive issue of AIDS testing and counseling," he said.

During the press briefing, one contestant strutted in front of the cameras sporting a black mask and latex shorts with multicolored condoms, chains and a placard that read: "Later is too Late."

Still another posed wearing boxer shorts made of plastic-bubble wrap, condom gloves, and a cardboard cape that said: "Fight AIDS."

This was a preview of the anti-AIDS fashion show scheduled on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, with pageant finals set on Dec. 27 at the Manila Film Center.

About 8.2 million people in Asia are HIV-positive. Of this figure, 1.2 million had been infected in the past 12 months, according to the latest United Nations report on AIDS.

AIDS Day today

The report was released in cities around the world, ahead of World Aids Day which is observed today.

UN agencies estimate that 3.1 million people will have died from AIDS in 2004—more than 540,000 of them in Asia—the most in any one year, and 200,000 more than in 2003.

Nearly 40 million people are infected with the HIV virus, the highest in the 23-year history of AIDS, according to UN agencies. *With a report from AP*

Graft raps set vs Abadia for P11-M wealth

From page A1

and 1993," making him also liable for perjury, Marcelo said.

The order for the filing of graft charges against Abadia, a 1962 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, came days after Marcelo announced that his office was investigating 10 generals and colonels—both active and retired—for unexplained wealth besides Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, a former AFP comptroller.

ABADIA

906% increase

In his resolution dated Nov. 30, Marcelo pointed to the 906-percent increase in Abadia's net worth from P670,000 in 1991 to P7,135,000 in 1993, as reflected in the retired general's SAL.

AS AFP chief of staff, Abadia declared a net worth of P6,476,000 in 1992, up by 71 percent from P3,775,000 in 1991. He declared a net worth of P13,611,000 in 1993, an increase of 101 percent from the previous year.

Abadia explained that his net worth rose in 1992 because he had sold assets worth P2,550,000.

"However, the records will show that respondent Abadia never submitted to date any deed of sale, receipt, checks or any other documentary evidence to support the existence of said transaction. Thus, no credence can be given to his allegation that he earned (P2.5 million) in 1992," Marcelo said.

The Inquirer tried to call Abadia on his mobile phone, but it was either turned off or was out of reach. He also did not reply to text messages.

'Fictitious' complaint

He returned the Inquirer's call at 6:30 p.m. yesterday and explained that he had already answered the charges, which, according to him, were first raised 11 years ago.

"I have already answered these accusations but the Ombudsman did not make any reply. There is no truth to charges that I have accumulated ill-gotten wealth," he said.

Abadia said a certain Jaime S. Reyes was the one who filed the complaint of unexplained wealth against him. But he said Jaime Reyes was a fictitious name. "I'm wondering why the Ombudsman is giving credence to a fictitious complainant," he said.

Abadia said the Ombudsman's decision to use the claim of a fictitious complainant as basis for filing graft charges against him was unconstitutional. "It is your right to confront your accuser," he said.

He said a "cabal" of top military and civilian officials was clearly out to pin him down for alleged graft and to embarrass him.

Abadia, who retired from the military in 1994, asked his detractors and the media to leave him in peace.

"I fought hard for this country and I have explained these accusations over and over again. And I don't deserve to be vilified this way. People should let me be in peace," said the retired general, who is now into farming.

In 1993, Abadia claimed earning P3,275,000 with his "amount of cash (jumping) from P4,445,000 in 1992 to P8,100,000 in 1993," Marcelo said. Abadia also acquired additional property worth P5,500,000.

Antipolo Properties shares

Abadia reportedly claimed that his wife Violeta Abadia "allegedly received P3,275,000 as second and full payment for 10,000 shares in Antipolo Properties Inc., which she sold in 1991 to a certain Mr. Victor Takai," Marcelo said.

But the Ombudsman said "such claim cannot be given credence."

He said that assuming, for the sake of argument, that there was a sale in 1991, Abadia's SAL for 1992 "would have reflected an account receivable corresponding" to the alleged second or full payment.

To justify the P7,135,000 increase in his net worth in 1993, Abadia claimed that he earned "P4,264,971 from alleged sale of shares in Palawan Oil and Gas Corp." in January 2004, Marcelo said.

The Ombudsman said that assuming, again for the sake of argument, that the transaction indeed took place, it happened in 1994 as Abadia had declared under oath.

Palawan Oil shares

Thus, the P4.2 million earnings for 1994 "should not be included in the computation of his legitimate income for 1993 and cannot be used to justify the huge increase in his net worth," Marcelo said.

The Ombudsman also noted that the "client's subsidiary ledger" submitted by Abadia showed that he purchased the shares from Palawan Oil on Jan. 7, 2004 and "started selling these on the very same day."

"Because of said circumstance, said transaction appears to be suspicious and thus, should be investigated," Marcelo said.

He directed the Ombudsman's Field Investigation Office to "conduct a fact-finding investigation relating to (Abadia's) purchase and disposition" of Palawan Oil shares "to determine whether criminal acts were committed and if committed," identify the persons liable for the alleged crime.

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UP economists ask Church to soften population stand

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE COUNTRY'S top economists have called on the Catholic Church hierarchy to adopt a "more tolerant and humane" stance on the need for a national population policy for the sake of the poor who are suffering because of their large family sizes.

In a paper titled "Population and Poverty: The Real Score," 17 economists from the University of the Philippines School of Economics said the Catholic clergy in the country should allow families to choose their preferred family planning method, consistent with the Second Vatican Council's teaching that the final arbiter of moral decisions is one's informed and responsible conscience.

The economists, the same group that warned of a fiscal crisis in the country, said the natural family planning (NFP) method being promoted by the Catholic Church was "too complicated and cumbersome and requires extraordinary discipline."

Extraordinary discipline

"A more humane stance would tolerate the use of modern and more effective methods of family planning, besides NFP, provided they do not result in abortion," the economists said.

"Perhaps it is time that the Catholic Church hierarchy and other religious groups listened to the people and took a more tolerant and humane position on the need for a state-supported population policy backed by responsive family planning program," they said.

Single biggest factor

Ernesto Pernia, one of the economists, said the Catholic Church's nod would be the single biggest factor that could push the government to make a turnaround and create a national population program.

"That's the popular perception. The Catholic Church is a main impediment to the implementation of an effective population policy," Pernia told the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday.

"We are urging the government and the Church to come up with an understanding on the need for a population policy given the desires expressed by the women in the country," he said.

Family size and poverty

The 22-page paper said poverty incidence in the country rose significantly with a bigger family size. Poverty incidence for a "family of one" is 9.8 percent compared with 57.3 percent for a family of nine or more.

"Family size is directly related to the vulnerability to poverty or the likelihood of falling into poverty owing to exogenous (external) shocks," the paper said.

The average expenditure for education in a family of one is P5,558 compared with a measly P682 for a family of nine or more. Health spending per capita also decreases from P1,700 for a family of one to P150 for a family of nine.

The poor could not count on the national government for social services as national per capita spending on these have dropped from P2,487 in 1999 to the present P1,999.

The paper acknowledged that bad governance, high wealth and income inequality, and weak economic growth were the main causes of poverty in the country.

It, however, also noted that rapid population growth and high fertility rates, especially among the poor, exacerbated the poverty and made it harder for the government to address it.

Bad governance, inequality

"It is more difficult to improve governance than adopt a national population policy. Improving governance would take several decades to achieve based on the experience of other countries, so we're saying it is easier to adopt a population policy to help address poverty," Pernia said.

He cited the population program of Indonesia and Thailand, which helped reduce poverty in those countries to 9.8 percent and 18.2 percent, respectively.

"The experience of Indonesia, where governance and corruption ratings are worse than those of the Philippines, suggests that good population policy by itself can contribute to significant poverty reduction. In short, population policy does matter," the paper said.

Elements of effective policy

The economists identified three elements for an effective population policy:

- Reduction of unwanted fertility, which accounts for 16 percent of the population growth. The economists urged the government to use public funds to buy contraceptives as most poor families do not have access to an effective family planning service.
- Raising the quality of education and fostering women's empowerment that would lead couples to want smaller families. A large wanted family size contributes 19 percent to the country's population growth.
- Creating job opportunities for women that would result in later childbearing age and wider birth spacing that would slow the population momentum, which accounts for 65 percent of the population growth.

"These measures are mutually reinforcing and, if backed by appropriate reforms in the economic and other social sectors, would bring about the best results... Even if not much can be done about public investments in infrastructure owing to the fiscal constraints, it would help ease the demand pressure coming from rapid population growth," the paper aid.

The paper, which will be presented at a media briefing at the UP School of Economics today, was prepared by Pernia, Ruperto Alonzo, Joseph Capuno, Rolando Danao, Emmanuel de Dios, Benjamin Diokno, Emmanuel Esguerra, Raul Fabella, Socorro Gochoco-Bautista, Aleli Kraft, Felipe Medalla, Nimfa Mendoza, Solita Monsod, Stella Quimbo, Gerardo Sicat, Orville Solon and Edita Tan.

Manila Water

Water interruption notice
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The interconnection of a segment of the ongoing major pipe replacement project called A. Rita Line will cause a temporary water service interruption in portions of Manila **from 6:00 p.m., Thursday, December 2, 2004, up to 8:00 a.m., Friday, December 3.** The activity is part of Manila Water's aggressive water improvement program.

Affected areas are San Andres, Sta. Ana and Paco.

Residents are advised to store enough water prior to the schedule of the water interruptions.

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(PDI – December 1, 2004)

Pinoy denied US residency . . .

From page A1

ance and applied for permanent resident status after marrying Ganzon later that year. But during interviews with immigration agents earlier this year, Ganzon, 58, revealed that she had undergone a male-to-female sex change operation in 1981.

Within three weeks, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services denied Javenella's application for permanent residency and revoked his working papers, according to the couple's lawsuit filed in US District Court.

In a letter to Javenella, the Department of Homeland Security explained its decision that "currently, no federal statute or regulation addresses specifically the question whether someone born a man or a woman can surgically change his or her sex."

The letter cited an internal memorandum dated April 16, 2004, that said CIS policy "disallows recognition of change of sex in order for a marriage between two persons born of the same sex to be considered bona fide."

The memo calls on the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act—which defines marriage for federal purposes as between a man and a woman—to support its position.

Marie Sebrechts, CIS spokesperson, said she could not comment on pending litigation. She declined to answer questions about the agency's policy on recognizing transsexual marriages.

Philip Abramowitz, the couple's attorney, said Javenella was now living illegally in the United States and faced deportation. The decision cannot be appealed and an immigration judge has not scheduled a hearing that would allow Javenella a chance to reapply, he said.

"He's in limbo, he has no alternative at all. He has no work permit and he lost his job last month because of that," Abramowitz said.

"Everything else was fine—she was a US citizen and the marriage was validly entered into."

Alphonso David, an attorney at Lambda Legal who specializes in transsexual lawsuits, said the suit was likely the first to challenge the INS in federal court over the immigration status of married transsexuals.

Landmark case

Lambda Legal is currently handling four lawsuits nationwide that deal with the recognition of transsexuals' status, but is not involved in the couple's case, David said.

"I'm certainly not aware of any other cases where the INS is interpreting or disregarding someone's sex reassignment," he said.

"It's a little problematic because they're saying that someone who has been living as a woman for 24 years is now ... will be treated as a male."

Conflict

David said the INS decision also set up a conflict between state and federal law. California is one of about 25 states that reissue birth certificates to transsexuals after sex change operations and legally recognizes them in their new gender.

Married in Vegas

Ganzon, a registered nurse, was born in the Philippines and has lived in the United States for more than 25 years, Abramowitz said. She was granted US citizenship in 1987—six years after her sex change operation—and given a certificate that listed her sex as female, the lawsuit said.

The couple met in the Philippines in 2000 and Javenella was granted legal residence in the United States on June 5, 2001. The couple married in Las Vegas on Nov. 21, 2001.

The lawsuit also names as defendants Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge; William Yates, CIS associate director for operations, and Jane Arellano, director of the CIS district office in Los Angeles. *AP*

DISCRIMINATION: A lawsuit filed by Filipino Jiffy Javenella alleges that his legal residency in the United States was denied as his wife Donita Ganzon had undergone a sex change 24 years ago. The couple pose at their home in Los Angeles, California. AP

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MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza (second from left), singer Freddie Aguilar, and other city officials lead a huge crowd at Liwasang Bonifacio (right photo) during the launch of Kilusang Pilipinas Kong Mahal, which highlighted the celebration marking the 141st birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio, a native of Tondo.

Play anthem in malls–Atienza

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MALL goers in Manila may soon have to stop and stand in attention for the national anthem.

As part of his nationalism campaign launched on the 141st birth anniversary of working class hero Andres Bonifacio yesterday, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza issued an executive order requiring all malls in Manila to play the national anthem once they open, and again on closing time, every business day.

"The order takes effect immediately, and if the owners don't comply, the harshest punishment they might get is to have a sour relationship with City Hall," Atienza told the INQUIRER.

The mayor has signed the order with the promise of permanently implementing it by way of a local law. Atienza added that he signed the executive order immediately to allow malls to prepare for its implementation.

He said that malls, which usually open at 10 a.m. and close at 8 or 9 p.m., would also have to display the Philippine flag inside their establishments, like other business firms—big or small—in the city.

Barangays and communities, had also been ordered by the mayor to hang or fly the Philippine flag in barangay halls and homes.

"The idea of the campaign is to make it a habit to display the Philippine flag and take pride in it," said Atienza, who led the launching of the "Kilusang Pilipinas Kong Mahal," a movement that seeks to revive nationalistic fervor in Filipinos.

About 60,000 students, teachers, barangay and city officials, and Manila residents showed up in front of the historic National Post Office Building in Ermita, Manila, for a program of nationalistic songs sung by the Manila City Chorale and singer Freddie Aguilar.

In Caloocan City, heavy traffic marred the celebration of Bonifacio Day yesterday.

Traffic was snail-paced in major roads around the Bonifacio Monument Circle, which was closed as early as 5:30 a.m. yesterday for a two-hour program.

Edgardo Bonifacio, a relative of the hero, led the wreath-laying ceremonies.

His father Ignacio, who died early this month, also built a monument for the hero in Novaliches, Quezon City, which was inaugurated the other day, Edgardo said.

In his speech, Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri said Bonifacio should serve as an example that even poor people could realize their dreams.

Guest speaker Sen. Manuel Villar said Filipinos should emulate Bonifacio's nationalism.

Militant groups in Manila also marked the day by holding rallies to call for better working conditions for workers.

In separate rallies, progressive and labor groups said the violent dispersal of laborers at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac on Nov. 16 brought into focus the sorry plight of workers who were just asking for better benefits. The dispersal left at least seven people dead.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan spokesperson Renato Reyes said their group would hold an indignation rally on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, to show solidarity with Hacienda Luisita workers. *With Edson Tandoc Jr. and Leila B. Salaverria*

Mandaluyong street lights up for Xmas

By Ruth L. Navarra

CHRISTMAS can never be too early, extravagant or overrated on Policarpio Street in Mandaluyong City.

Take it from Norma Lim, a resident who said that as soon as they took down their Yuletide display last year, her family started planning for this year's theme.

As early as March, the Lims commissioned workers from Quezon City to complete "Santa's Workshop" so guests could enjoy the moving elves and dancing Santa Claus this year.

Her, as well as her neighbors', enthusiasm has made the street a tourist destination for the past eight years. People from all over Luzon are beckoned by the colorful lights that turn Policarpio into a Christmas wonderland.

Tonight, residents of Policarpio will officially open their display. The lights and Christmas shows would be open from 6 p.m. up to, at the very least, 11 p.m.

Lim said the country's spirit needed lifting and she hoped people would forget their problems for a while when they see the lights.

She refused to say how much they spent this year but added "God provides for those who give happiness to other people."

According to Lim, the smiles of visitors are enough to cover the cost of building the displays.

In contrast to Lim's grandiose display is the simple decoration of Emelita Mariano two houses away.

She said they were not under pressure to spend more than what they could afford.

Mariano related that one of the best things about the tradition was that they get to know people all over the country.

Another advantage was that movie and TV actors go to them instead of the other way around. Mariano proudly said that she had a vast collection of her photos taken with a star.

Organizers and barangay officials alike say that the number of visitors had been consistently increasing every year.

Officials of Barangay Zaniga are the coordinating security along the street.

They have also coordinated with the Bureau of Fire for a quick response in case of fire.

Maynilad tells customers: Boil water first

By Tina G. Santos

USE FILTERS or boil drinking water.

This was the advice of the Maynilad Water Services Inc. after the water supply in some parts of Metro Manila turned brown yesterday.

In a statement, the water firm explained that soil run-off in the Angat Dam due to heavy rains caused high turbidity in water reaching their treatment plants.

Maynilad engineer Steve Esteban said very high turbidity or presence of soil content affected the capability of its treatment plants to remove sediments from the water.

To cope with the situation, Maynilad increased the chlorine content of the water, making it safe to use.

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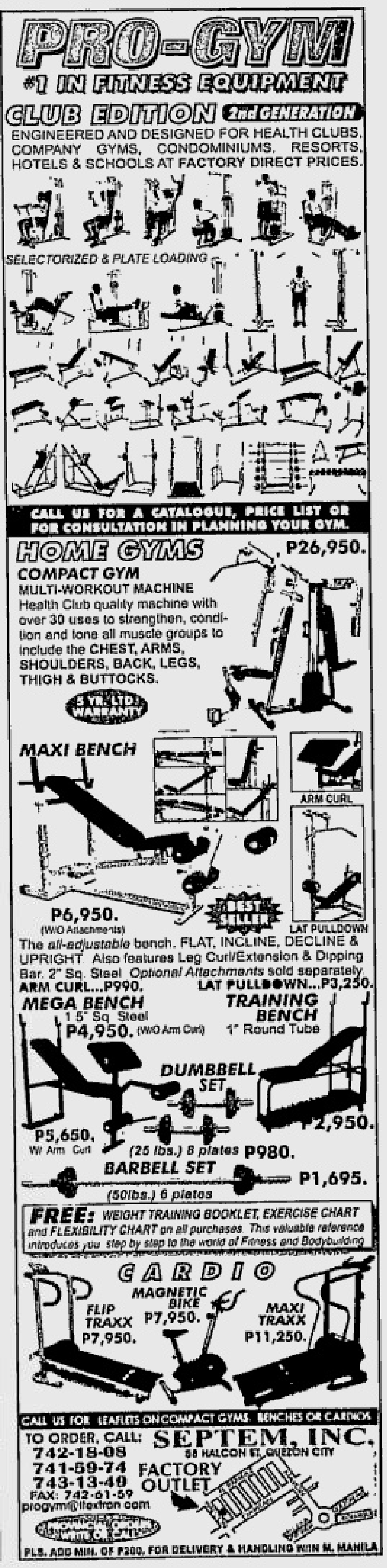

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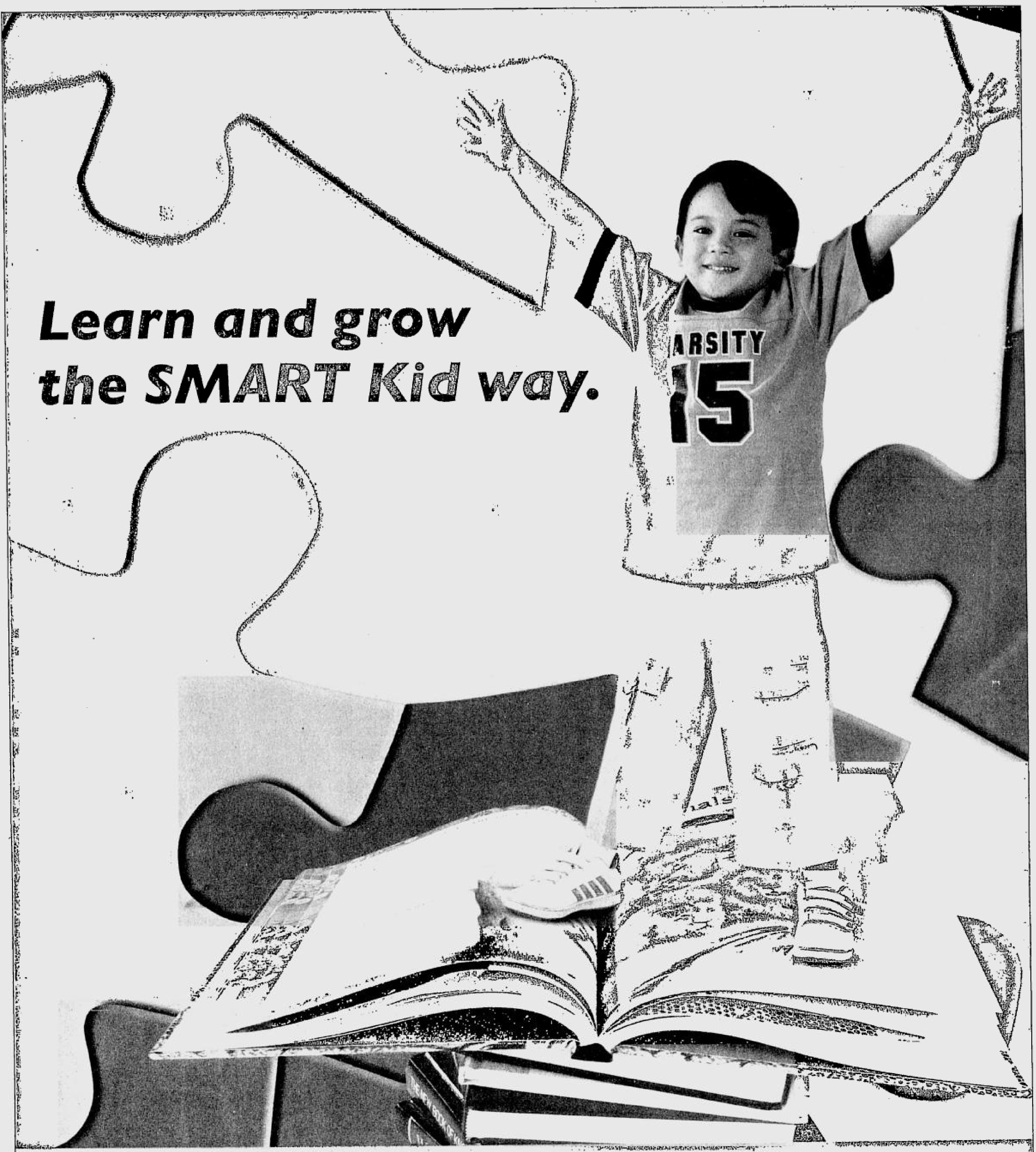

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Compiled by L. Manguiat

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NBA— Pistons vs Rockets; 9:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Defending champion Detroit collides with Houston.

FOOTBALL: Uefa Champions League; 6 p.m.; Star Sports—Spanish power Barcelona collides with Irish squad Celtic.

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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Happy Viewing!

Barrera says no to Pacquiao

Mexican champ 'no longer interested' in rematch with Filipino tormentor

BARRERA celebrates victory over Morales. REUTERS

By Recah Trinidad

IT'S being billed as the biggest boxing event in 2005, but the projected rematch between Manny Pacquiao and Marco Antonio Barrera has crashed before it could take off.

Reason: Barrera no longer wants to fight Pacquiao, who crushed and stopped the Mexican boxing icon in 11 tounds in Texas last year.

Information on Barrera's sudden refusal came from Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao's US promoter, who told journalist Ronnie Nathanielsz yesterday the Mexican champ had a sudden change of heart hours after he wrested the WBC super-featherweight title in a close, thrilling third fight with Erik Morales in Las Vegas.

Barrera's handlers, headed by Oscar de la Hoya of the Golden Boy Promotions, suggested that Pacquiao instead take on world 122-lb champ Oscar Larios, who outpointed Nedal Hussein in the undercard of the Barrera-Morales bout.

PACQUIAO

There was ready suspicion Barrera was in fear of Pacquiao, and with good reason.

Barrera could handle Morales' soft punches but he cannot handle Pacquiao's power shots.

As shown in the third encounter in Las Vegas on Sunday, Morales lost on points because he did not pack a big one.

Most displeased over the Barrera turnaround were Pacquiao and his chief handler, Freddie Roach.

In fact, Roach had suggested during training in Davao that Pacquiao could skip his scheduled rematch with Juan Manuel Marquez and take on Barrera out right in February.

"Barrera claims his head wasn't right in the first fight against Manny," Roach said. "If he wants to redeem himself, we will be happy to accommodate him."

Then, staring hard, Roach told the INQUIRER: "We will be there to give Barrera another bad night."

Pacquiao himself had expressed elation over the Barrera points victory, although he had previously picked Morales to win.

Pacquiao goes into another rigid sparring at the Almendras Gym in Davao today.

He's scheduled to leave for Manila with his retinue on Thursday, in time for a Friday meeting with sponsors and organizers of his fight against Fahsan 3K Battery at The Fort in Taguig.

Roach said Pacquiao was already 10 rounds ready last Monday for his fight on Dec. 11.

The famous American trainer said Pacquiao would be 100 percent on fight night.

Grudge tiff could be richest 130-lb fight

IF plans to pit Manny Pacquiao and Marco Antonio Barrera fall into place, expect the two boxers to figure in what could be the richest junior lightweight showdown in the history of professional boxing.

This was the consensus among boxing pundits following Barrera's hard-earned majority decision victory over Erik Morales last Sunday in their epic third encounter. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

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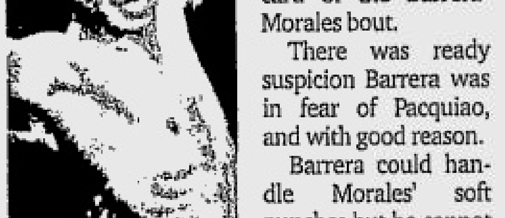

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Magnolia, Toyota-Otis whip rivals

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAGNOLIA-FEU jumped out to a double-digit lead early in the game to shut down cellar-dwelling Air Philippines, 86-55, in the PBL Open Championship yesterday at the Letran Gym.

"Overall, I was satisfied," said coach Koy Banal after the the Ice Cream Wizards won their fourth straight match. "I cannot be a perfectionist but I always remind the team to aim for perfection. Because when you do that, *mas mabilis ang* growth and maturity."

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Blue Eagle Gym, Ateneo*)
2 p.m.—Air Philippines vs Montaña
4 p.m.—Addict Mobile-Ateneo vs Granny Goose

Cesar Catli shot 12 points, while Warren Ybañez added 10 to pace the Wizards' balanced attack.

"In this team, anybody can step up at any given time," noted Banal.

Later, Toyota Otis-Letran also scored a lopsided victory against ICTSI-La Salle, 85-61.

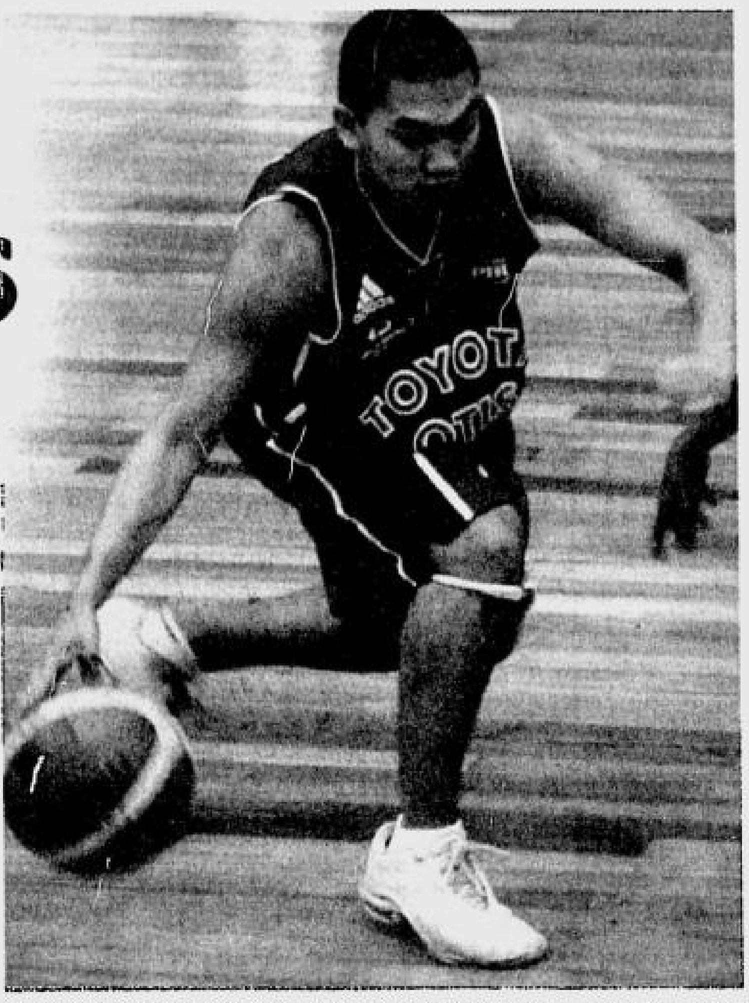
Ronjay Enrile finally flashed his usual dominance as he led the Knights with 15 points, while behemoth center Mark Andaya delivered a double-double with 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Magnolia-FEU still stood at third with a 6-3 slate, half a game behind league-leaders Granny Goose and Montaña. Toyota Otis-Letran improved to 4-5, while ICTSI-La Salle slipped to 3-6.

After Catli, Gerard Jones and Mark Isip helped wrapped up a 37-24 halftime lead for Magnolia-FEU, the defending champions opened the second half with nine unanswered points, including two triples from Catli, to build a 22-point bubble, 46-24.

Ybañez then kept the Wizards ahead as he drilled eight of his 10 points in the third quarter.

Air Philippines, which absorbed its seventh straight loss, played its worst offensive game, shooting just 26-percent from the field. The Flight were also outrebounded, 58-45.


BOYET Bautista presides over Toyota-Otis' offense. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

The scores:

First game

MAGNOLIA-FEU 86—Catli 12, Ybañez 10, Miranda 8, Jones 8, Rizada 8, Rañeses 7, Santos 7, Chan 6, Razon 6, Isip 5, Yabut Misolas 4, Co 0, Sison 0.

AIR PHILIPPINES 55—Epondulan 11, Aljamal 11, Joe 7, Te 6, Hubalde 3, Alonzo 3, Holper 3, Paterno 3, Pua 3, Vizcarra 3, Garrido 2, Gomez 0, Gonzales 0, Tolentino 0.

Quarters: 13-10, 37-24, 59-37, 86-55.

Second game

TOYOTA OTIS-LETRAN 85—Enrile 15, Andaya 11, Rodriguez 10, Aban 10, Bautista 8, Abadia 6, Piñera 6, Daa 6, Coronel 6, Alcaraz 4, Macapagal 3, Mondragon 0, Dula 0.

ICTSI-LA SALLE 61—Cardona 25, Yeo 11, Casio 7, Gaco 7, Walsham 4, Tang 2, Benitez 2, Cua 2, Cabatu 1, Gavino 0, Aquino 0.

Quarters: 18-15, 36-29, 59-45, 85-61.

Sta. Lucia downs TNT as Aquino, Duremdes shine

By Musong Castillo

KENNETH Duremdes scored 34 points and Marlou Aquino played through persistent trade rumors to chip in 29 last night as Sta. Lucia held off hard-finishing Talk 'N Text, 104-102, in a Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup road game in Puerto Princesa.

The Realtors blew a 17-point lead at the end of the half and even trailed early in the fourth, before Duremdes and Aquino bailed them out as Sta. Lucia won for the fourth time in 12 games to move out of the cellar.

Willie Miller led the Phone Pals with 27 markers and not even four others in double digits could help Talk 'N Text from losing for the second time in 12 outings.

The Realtors jumped out of the gates with all guns firing, closing out the first two quarters with a 60-43 advantage, before blowing cold in the third and allowing the Phone Pals to enter the fourth facing only a 75-76 deficit.

Jimmy Alapag, arguably the finest point guard in the land, scored all of his 11 points in the fourth and the Phone Pals even took a 96-93 lead with 3:20 left.

But Aquino, in his worthiest performance this year, scored consecutive baskets and squared the match at 96 with 2:17 left in the game that was made possible by Lactovitale, the official food supplement of the PBA road show.

The Phone Pals could only make a free throw in the next 1:30 and the Realtors pounced on this to take a 102-97 lead heading into the final 57 seconds.

Meanwhile, San Miguel Beer faces FedEx tonight with Olsen Racela nearing a third career milestone.

The cerebral playmaker is two steals short of becoming the 15th player in league history to achieve 500 steals but is currently focused more on his team's pursuit than of his own.

Racela broke into the elite 5,000-point circle during San Miguel Beer's 88-82 out-of-town victory over Purefoods three weeks ago in Tacloban City. Late in the Fiesta Conference, he reached the 2,000-assist plateau.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 104—Duremdes 34, Aquino 29, Espino 10, Omolon 8, Mendoza 8, Cuan 7, Santos 4, Gonzales 4, Locsin 0, Ong 0, Francisco 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 102—Miller 27, De Ocampo 17, Pablo 16, Telan 16, Alapag 11, Belano 8, Camaso 5, Ravena 2, Fran 0, Gelig 0.

Quarters: 34-22, 60-43, 76-75, 104-102

Unheralded Javier bags Olympic Round gold

A VIRTUAL unknown from Silliman University, Mark P. Javier, bagged the gold medal in the Olympic Round individual competition Monday in the 1st Ramon A. Lim Memorial Cup national archery indoor target championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The 23-year-old Information Technology senior nosed out Mitchelle Panilag of Cagayan de Oro, 113-111, in the men's recurve finals.

Javier also ruled the adult recurve event by whipping Canama's Zander Lee Reyes via the tiebreak after they had ended tied at 113 points together with bronze winner Panilag.

The other gold medalists: Rosendo Sombrio (men's individual compound, men's adult compound), Juan Ishmael Andres (boys' cadet), Jeffrey Corpuz (boys' junior), Allyson Barrero (boys' standard round), Paul Marton dela Cruz (men's FITA competitive), Nestor de Castro (Master compound) and Luis Bambao (Master recurve).

RP stint in Taiwan a shameful disaster

By Anthony Suntay, *Contributor*

IT'S SOMETHING I will never forget.

Unfortunately, it's an experience I would much rather erase from my memory because it leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

The coverage of the 1st Fiba Asia Stankovic Cup in Taipei was one tough grind.

It's because of the appalling performance of the RP squad, which finished dead last—and in embarrassing fashion—in the tournament.

The team lost to Qatar by 52, Syria by 31, Japan by 60, India by 18 and Kuwait by 22.

It all started out quite harmlessly. I got a call from the ESPN office in Singapore for a routine assignment. It turned out to be less than routine.

On the day of our first broadcast, I was already apprehensive about the RP game against Qatar, given the recent setbacks the Filipinos absorbed in international competitions.

But what I was about to witness in Taiwan was unprecedented. It was one blowout loss after another.

My broadcast partner, Chuck Shriner, was to say he was "at a loss for words."

Compared to the other games we covered, he would have to check himself whenever he wanted to say something about the Filipinos, most probably out of respect for me. I have never been put in that compromising situation before.

And Team Philippines did nothing to ease the situation. They didn't seem to have a clue how to approach a basketball game.

You get the impression they believed the *perdi gana* rule was in effect.

As if that wasn't bad enough, head coach Johny Tam was caught on camera talking on his cell phone during the final minutes of their match against India. What was he thinking?!

Don't get me wrong, I do want to get another call from ESPN for another assignment.

More basketball?

Sure, why not. I just hope our basketball leaders make it a point to send a team with a purpose from now on.

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Go offers the BAP a conscience

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NOW comes the unsinkable Go Teng Kok applying for a job.

That, indeed, should be news to Mr. Go's countless admirers and haters.

For one, GTK does not have to work a single day the rest of his life.

He has the riches, acquired and inherited, to see him through in both comfort and style.

Jobs? Other than head his own business, he's on top of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa) and, of late, the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

But here comes the knight in shining armor of Philippine sports again begging to be taken in.

He, in fact, has vowed to give all, do everything, for the sake of Philippine sports.

You're free to laugh or cry.

***

For reference purposes, GTK claims to have made things better in the national athletics association that he heads.

Approved, no question about that.

He explains, with unconcealed pride, that he has brought peace and harmony in the national chess association, where he also happens to be president.

That, too, could be believed.

Now, Go has been saying he wants to save amateur basketball in the Philippines.

***

No, he does not say it.

But after another monumental mess that showed the BAP was being mismanaged by an alien with a dirty conscience, GTK has applied to cleanse the association.

He says he also wants to give RP basketball reason to hope.

Of course, the Basketball Association of the Philippines, the way it's being run, needs a guiding light.

And, if symbols and appearances must count, Go, who loves to go around in immaculate white, could fit into the job.

***

The problem, Go states, is Graham Lim, the BAP sec-gen, who turned down his request not to send an RP national team to that forgettable Taipei international tournament.

For starters, Go says he has told Lim, his protégé, that it would be suicidal to field a trash team in the Fiba-Stankovic Cup in Taipei.

Go says Lim disobeyed him.

As a result, the RP flag got shamefully trampled upon, kicked around like stinking garbage during the tournament.

"Look," Go tells Lim (quoting himself), "this is basketball and nobody fools around with it here in the Philippines."

Maybe Go has warned that basketball is regarded as religion around here?

***

Continues GTK: "I would like to gather all the major players, the PBA, PBL, NCAA, UAAP, etc. to bring peace and harmony in basketball."

He also asks for support and advice.

Who knows? GTK, a one-time lost soul, could be blessed with a healing touch.

Anyway, for the record, Lim has been telling close friends in the media he could not beg off the Stankovic Cup in Taipei because RP would be banned in future Fiba leagues.

Maybe, but that claim, coming from Lim should be subject to verification.

Well, the fact that he had led the country to that dead-end clearly bared a tragic failure of leadership.

Truth is Lim has been failing the Philippines even before the Stankovic Cup.

***

For record purposes, the Asian Basketball Confederation has provided us with this list of the recent dismal RP team stints under Lim's conscience-less stint:

- **ABC Champions Cup (2004)—10th out of 10 teams**
- **ABC 22-Under (2004)—11th of 15**
- **ABC 18-Under (2004)—13th of 16**
- **ABC Men's (2003)—15th of 16**

All were, for the record, worst finishes ever for the Philippines.

***

Lim's dirty record should speak for itself.

If GTK has suddenly known goodness, as he claims, he should help get rid of Lim.

That's the order of business, if GTK sincerely wants to help.

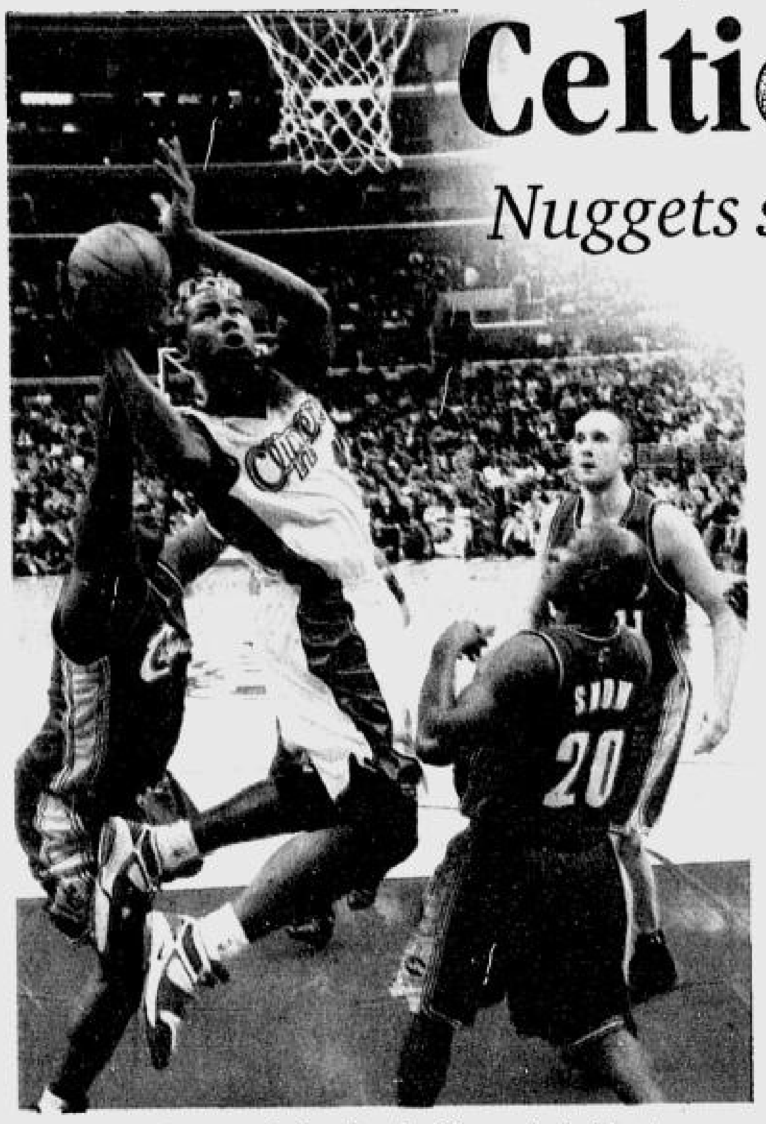
No, let's call on our idol, freedom fighter Rene Saguisag to close this one:

"As population growth declines or slow down the world over, we may not only be tops in corruption and ineptitude but in being busy at 3 a.m. (making love) and we come up with Graham Lims. Top athlete Mayor Arsenio H. Lacson once said there are people who are the best arguments for birth control.

Touche'.Thank you, sir. Thank you also ESPN for showing us finally how Graham Lim uses the RP flag to wipe the behind of his masters and clients abroad.

Celtics snap four-game skid

Nuggets struggle past woeful Hornets; Clippers sink Cavs



ELTON Brand powers the Los Angeles Clippers to their best November record in a long, long while. AFP

ORLANDO, Florida—Doc Rivers got his team back on track while gaining a measure of revenge on his old squad, and the Boston Celtics snapped a four-game losing streak by beating the Orlando Magic, 117-101, on Monday night.

The Magic fired Rivers a year ago, after four-plus seasons, when the team stumbled out to a 1-10 start. Rivers, the NBA's coach of the year in 2001, had a 171-168 record with three trips to the playoffs.

Paul Pierce scored 24 points, leading seven players in double figures, as the Celtics enjoyed their best offensive performance of the season. Marcus Banks added a season-high 20 off the bench for Boston.

Hedo Turkoglu scored 17 points and Kelvin Cato had his first double-double with 14 points and 12 boards for the Magic.

In Denver, Earl Boykins scored 22 points to help the Denver Nuggets overcome the absence of Carmelo Anthony and defeat the New Orleans Hornets, 76-67.

The Nuggets won for the sixth time in seven games, but struggled mightily against the undermanned and league dormats Hornets.

In Los Angeles, Elton Brand had a season-high 30 points, Bobby Simmons scored nine of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, and the Clippers completed a 94-82 drubbing of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

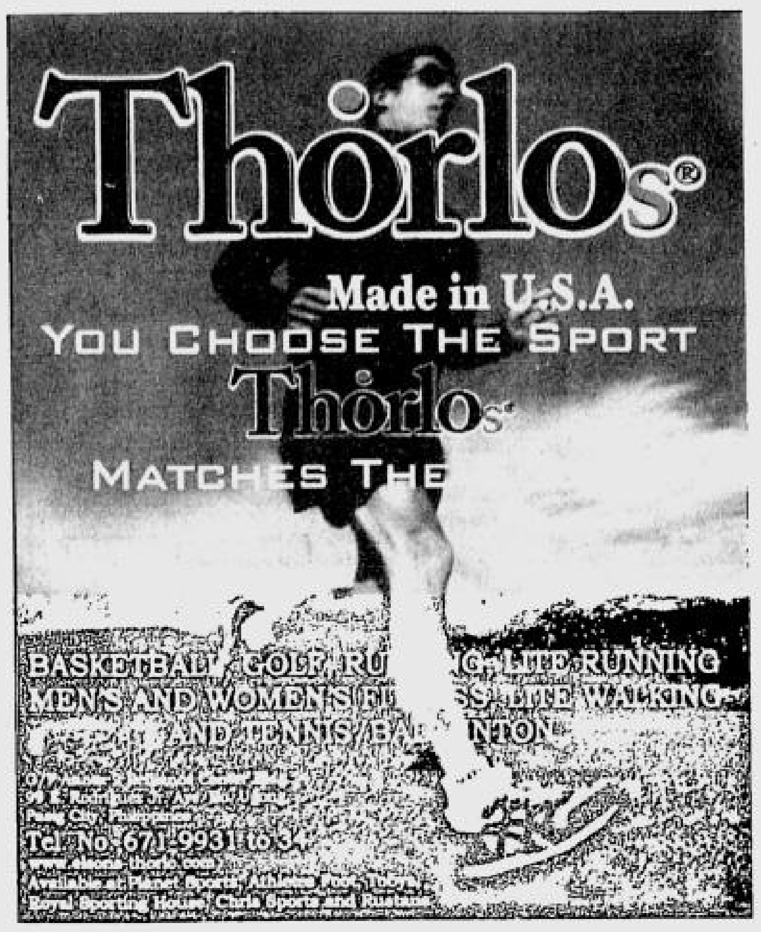
By winning their fourth straight game, the Clippers (9-6) have their best November record since the 1974-75 team, playing in Buffalo, went 12-4. *AP*

Paragua, Barbosa make top 20

GRANDMASTER candidate Mark Paragua and NM Oliver Barbosa of the Philippines finished with 7.5 points each to finish in the top 20 of the 43rd World Junior Chess Championships Tuesday in Cochin, India.

Paragua drew with IM Mateusz Bartel of Poland while Barbosa beat Srinivas Sai of India.

GM Pentala Harikrishna of India copped the title with 10 points. *Marlon Bernardino*



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Deadshot Tac seizes centerfire pistol gold

PADILLA: 2nd gold

VETERAN internationalist Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla showed why he's the country's top pistolero Sunday by adding to his collection the centerfire pistol gold medal in the National Open shooting championships at the Marine range in Fort Bonifacio.

Padilla, general manager of the family-owned Spring Cooking Oil, fired 560 points to beat brother Donald (552) and Army's Joel Mariano (543).

"*Bumabalik na ang tira*," said Tac Padilla, who failed to practice for more than one month to fulfill a personal commitment abroad. "This is a good start in our preparations for next year's Southeast Asian Games."

It was Padilla's second gold medal in two weeks, having won his favorite event, rapid fire, last week.

Two other members of the national team like Padilla—Carolino Gonzales and Susan Aguado—topped their respective events.

Gonzales tallied 548 to beat brother Marcelo (532) in the 50-meter free pistol event while Aguado carded 559 to topple Therese Cantada (557) in the sport pistol competition.

Army's Eric Guiniling and Mariano also won a gold medal each in the 50-meter free rifle prone and center fire (cal. 45), respectively.

Guiniling shot 579 to nip Navy's Dennis Hernandez (578), while Mariano scored 543 to rip Diomedes de Guzman (522).

Guiniling, Benny Cagurin and Rocky Pardilla combined for 1724 to give AFP/DND B the free rifle team title over AFP/DND A (1722).

SEAG preparations on track, says Obet

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE P800 million budget is yet to be raised, the overall organization plan is not yet in place, and even the official website is still off-line. But if you'll ask 2005 Southeast Asian Games chief organizer Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan, the country's SEAG preparations are even "ahead of schedule."

With only 12 months to go before the country's third SEA Games hosting, Pagdanganan yesterday kicked off the Games' preparation by unveiling the official logo and mascot, which still doesn't have a name.

But there's no need to worry, according to the former Tourism czar, who is now the chair and chief operating officer of the Philippine International Trade Corporation.

Pagdanganan explained there are no major facilities to be built, with most of the work focused on the refurbishing of government-owned venues.

"We are on track and even slightly ahead of schedule," said Pagdanganan of the SEA Games set for Nov. 27 to Dec. 5 in Metro Manila, Subic, Bacolod City and Cebu City.

Pagdanganan expressed confidence that enough money will be raised for the 23rd SEA Games, which is expected to lure at least 10,000 foreign athletes and officials from 10 other SEAG member-countries.

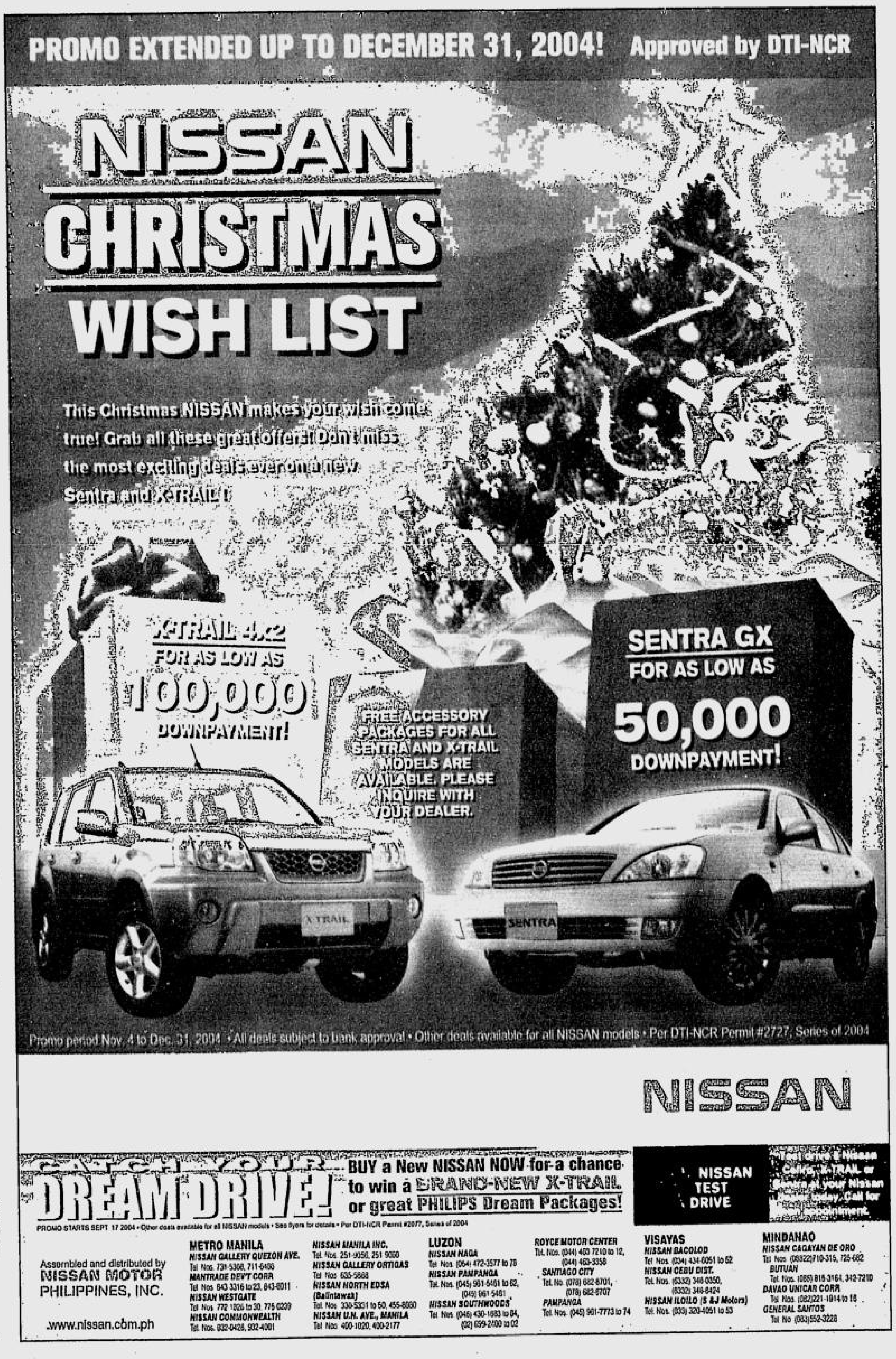
The chosen logo depicts a festival mask. The mascot, which was changed from the reclusive tarsier to the proud Philippine Eagle, will be named through a nationwide contest.

The opening rites will be taken out of the cramped Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, site of the 1981 and 1991 SEAGs, and brought to the Quirino Grandstand to accommodate more audience.

Pagdanganan named bowling chief Steve Hontiveros as Philsoc secretary general and PSC commissioner Butch Ramirez as deputy secretary general. Last month, Pagdanganan named incoming Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco as Philsoc vice chair.

Pagdanganan also named Manila Sports Council chief Arnold "Ali" Atienza co-chair of the Programs and Ceremonies Committee for the biennial sports conclave.

Atienza will share the post with stage director Maria Vargas-Montelibano.



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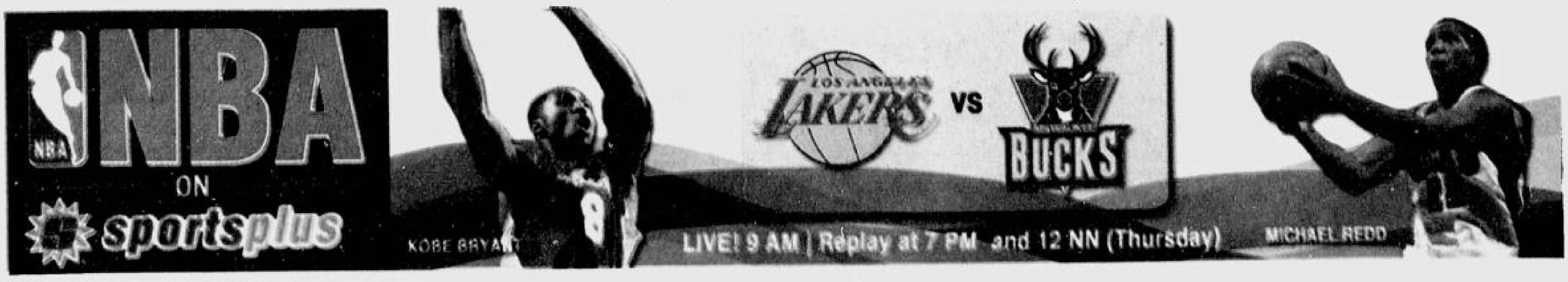

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AF3 big guns test Mikola

TOP ASIAN Formula 3 drivers will test Indonesian Ananda Mikola, who humbled the opposition in the penultimate leg last October in his home track, when the Addict Mobile Formula 3 Super Prix, the fifth and last leg of the AF3 series, is held this Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Mikola is one of several foreign drivers seeing action in the event that will bring the curtain down on yet another smashing season for Formula 3 racing that also visited China earlier this year.

Australian Christian Jones still leads the race for the overall title, with Ireland's John O'Hara close on his heels.

Jones will team up with Dado Peña in their bid to propel Christian Jones Motosport to victory in the team event of the competition, with the biggest challenge expected to come from Shell Kinetic Racing represented by Pepon Marave, O'Hara and Mikola.

Asian Formula 3 Corp. chair Ed Peña, guesting in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion, said everything is set for the season finale, adding "racing fans can expect topnotch racing from start to finish."

Ed Peña said other foreign drivers challenging the AF3 regulars are Oliver Turvey of England, Moreno Seopranto of Indonesia and John Pettit of Australia.

Snipers seek 1st finals berth

CEBU CITY—The Ilocos Sur Snipers shoot for the first finals seat when they tangle with the Quezon Coco Huskers at 5 p.m. today in the United Regional Basketball League (URBL) semifinal round at the New Cebu City Coliseum.

Host M. Lhuillier hopes to stay in contention when it tackles Harbour Centre-Pampanga at 7 p.m.

Having won their first four semifinal games, the Snipers are just trying to formalize their entry to the best-of-five finals.

The Coco Huskers, on the other hand, tote a 2-win, 2-loss card and are in a must-win situation to stay in contention.

Like the Coco Huskers, the Jewelers need to hurdle their last two matches. The Jewelers, however, enjoy the homecourt edge as the last two playing days of the semis will be played in their turf.

To boost the Huskers' morale, team owner and Quezon Gov. Willie Enverga and members of the provincial board are reportedly flying in for today's games.

"The situation proves the league's balanced competition and it has come to an unpredictable climax," said URBL Commissioner Ramon Fernandez.

The Snipers' bid hit a snag after starting guard Orly Torrente sustained a season-ending knee injury in their 84-75 victory over the Jewelers last Nov. 23.

STANDINGS	W	L
Ilocos Sur Snipers	4	0
M. Lhuillier-Cebu	2	2
Quezon Coco Huskers	2	2
Harbour Centre-Pampanga	0	4

GAMES TODAY (*New Cebu Coliseum*)
5 p.m.—Quezon Huskers vs Ilocos Sur Snipers
7 p.m.—M. Lhuillier-Cebu vs HC-Pampanga

PSC lady tossers survive Lyceum

By Musong R. Castillo

PSC'S motley crew of veterans surged to the solo lead of the Shakey's V-League eliminations yesterday, but only after being dragged to an extra set by a gritty Lyceum side, 25-18, 25-19, 19-25, 25-13, at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

The PSC lady tossers sputtered for one crucial stretch in the third set, but regained their form in the fourth to wrap up their second victory in as many starts in just over two hours.

Army enlisted women Amelia Guanco and Theresa dela Rosa combined for 30 points and stood at the vanguard of the PSC attack.

"We entered this tournament to have fun and inspire the younger set of players," said PSC coach Tats Suzara. "But after today, this is a different story already. We will try to win as many games as we can."

In the second game, Letran outlasted Far Eastern U, 25-21, 18-25, 22-25, 20-25.

The PSC team is made up of the core of the 1993 Southeast Asian Games gold-medal winning RP team. The court legends look terribly out of shape, but have so far played according to pre-tournament hype.

And Suzara is not wary of the fatigue factor, even if the average age of his players is just a shade under 34 years.

"The longer this tournament goes, I think the better we will get. These are all experienced players and they know what it takes to win."

Indeed, it looked like PSC would blow the Lyceum away without much of a fight, until the Lady Pirates caught fire late in the third set, winning six straight points to break an 18-18 deadlock and zoom in front, 24-18.

The Lyceum challenge finally gave in early in the fourth as PSC rattled off seven straight points highlighted by three Guanco service winners.

Dela Rosa then gave PSC match point, a perfectly placed dink that ended the game's longest rally.

Petron 'battle of champions' fires off Sunday

THE COUNTRY'S top beach volleyball pairs slug it out in a virtual battle of champions when the fourth and final leg of this year's Petron Ladies beach volleyball tournament kicks off Sunday at the Cantada Sports Center in Bicutan, Taguig.

"This is what we call the battle of champions," said former PSC commissioner and tournament organizer Tisha Abundo. A total of 10 teams, including the Navy, Air Force and the University of Assumption in Pampanga are expected to crowd each other for the crown and with it, the top cash prize of P10,000 and a trophy.

The playing field, made up of champions and runners-up from the previous legs plus a couple of hand-picked squads, will be divided into two groups and teams will play a single elimination round.

EUGENE A. ARANETA

DIANA May Diaz of Letran scores off FEU's Ruby May Rovira (14) and Mary Dianne Torres in yesterday's game.

FIL-AM GOLF

Southwoods seniors stay in front

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Heavy rains suspended play in the 55th Fil-Am International Golf Tournament Tuesday, leaving the Manila Southwoods seniors atop the "Fil" division with 108 points.

Both the Camp John Hay and Baguio Country Club layouts, which will accommodate a total of 1,011 players for the regular and senior tournaments, were declared unplayable after rains made the fairways and greens soggy.

Orchard trails Southwoods with its 89 PAL Stableford points, followed by the NBI golfers with 86.

Camp Aguinaldo paces the "Am" championship flight after pooling an 89 on opening day Monday. Aloha Golf had 80 points, with Syndicate Seniors running third, two points farther adrift.

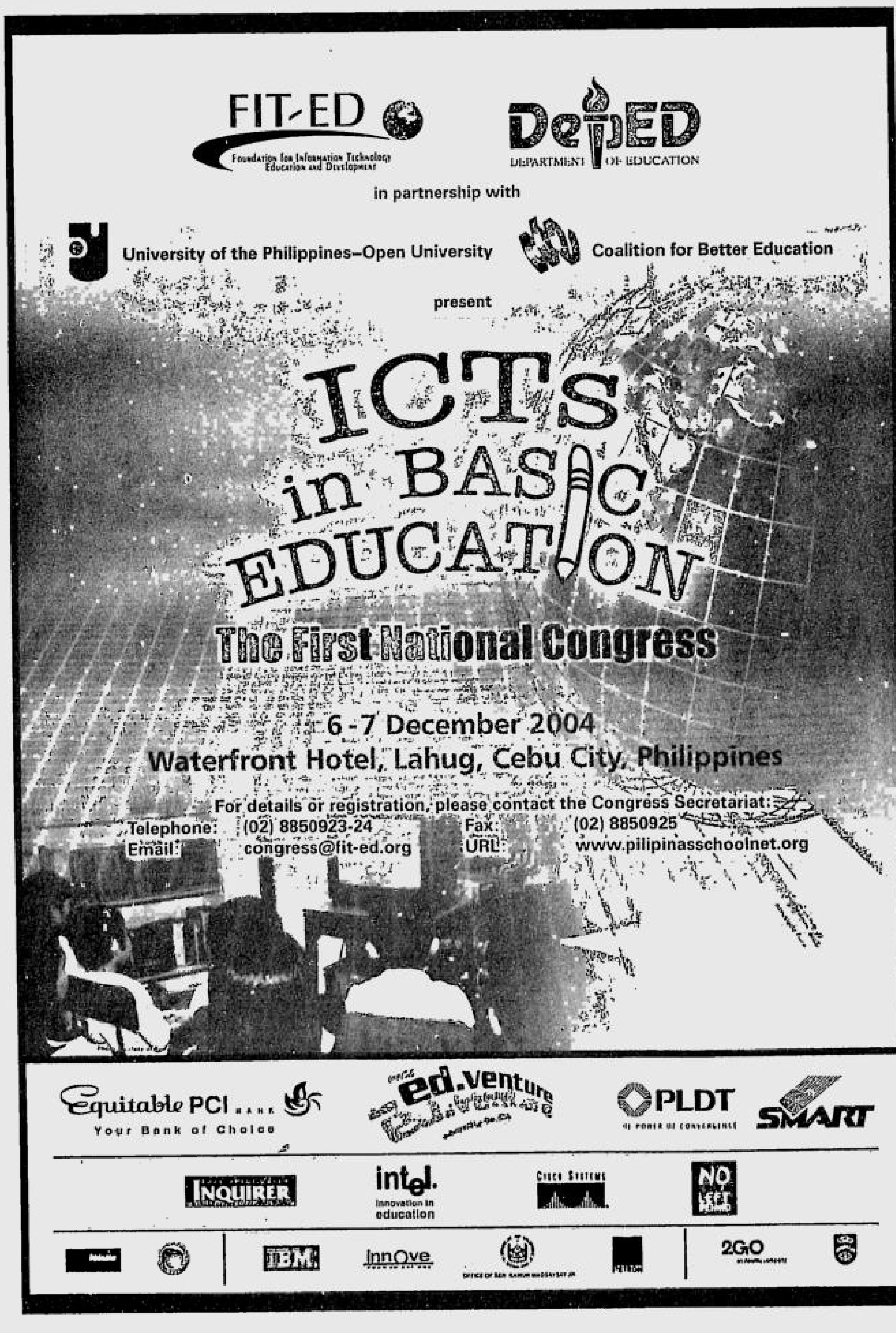
In Flight A of the Fil division, Baguio Councilor Federico Mandapat Jr. scored the best first-day total of 32, and the rest of Camp John Hay combined to make it a 120 total, 36 in front of Riviera-Mizuno.

John Hay also leads Flight A in the "Am" division with 94 points. Capitol Hills was second with 77, followed by Riviera-Mizuno (73), and Chamorro Golf Club (66) in third and fourth, respectively.

Larry Stover of Seoul Survivor and retired US serviceman Ted Tanag scored aces in different holes, with Stover qualifying for a grand prize with his first career hole-in-one at BCC's first hole.

Stover has a chance to win a Jean Richard TV Screen Chronoscope watch worth P250,000 from Lucerne Jewelers. If other players make an ace on the same hole, their names would be drawn for the prize.

Tanag scored the second ace of his career in John Hay's No. 6.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Solons back drive vs EIA; races to go on at S. Lazaro

By Edwin Villanueva, *Contributor*

THE PHILIPPINE Racing Commission's intensive drive against the horse disease equine infectious anemia (EIA) yesterday got the full backing of several lawmakers following the assurance by the country's horse racing groups that they are solidly behind the campaign.

In a recent meeting with top officials of the Marho, Philtobo and Klub Don Juan de Manila, Rep. Benhur Abalos (Mandaluyong), Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio (Caloocan), Rep. Mikey Arroyo (Pampanga), Rep. Abraham Mitra (Palawan) and Rep. Mark Cojuangco (Pangasinan) all endorsed the Philracom project, saying it is vital to the development of the local racing industry.

Abalos said the three racing groups all reiterated their stand to fully support the Philracom under chair Jimmy Dilag in its all-out war against the EIA virus.

"If we don't address the EIA problem, the local racing industry will suffer," said Abalos, a horseowner who chairs the house committee on appropriations for the Philracom, Games and Amusements Board, and Philippine Sports Commission.

Asistio, also a well-respected horseowner-breeder, said: "The Philracom campaign against EIA is very timely. *Kung hindi kikilos agad, baka maubusan na tayo ng mga pangarerang kabayo* (If we don't act now, we might run out of race horses)."

The Marho, headed by its president, Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, Philtobo chief Bienvenido Niles Jr. and KDJM vice president Lamberto Almeda Jr., as well as top owner-breeder Hermie Esguerra, recently signed a certification of support for the Philracom program.

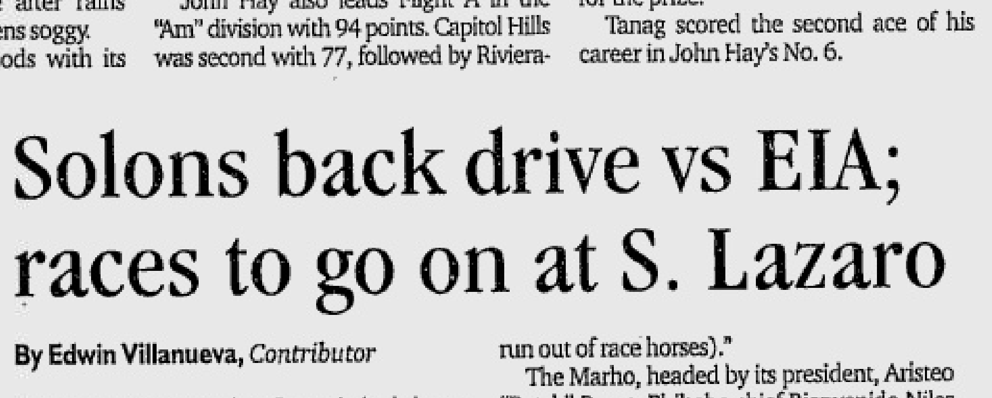
"This is the time for all of us to be united and settle our differences. *Huwag na muna nating isipin ang sarili nating interes* (Let's set aside our personal interests), and instead help the Philracom in its program against the EIA," said Puyat.

The Philippine Race Horse Trainers Association (Prahota) and the newly formed association of off-track betting stations also threw their support behind the racing body.

Meanwhile, Dilag and commissioner Eddie Jose assured the betting public yesterday that races will go on as scheduled at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, this week despite the boycott threat of a motley group of horseowners opposing the anti-EIA drive.

"In fact, the racing program for this week is already complete and we still have a lot of horses in reserve," added Dilag, who was reassured by officials of the Marho, Philtobo and KDJM of their total support during the Philtobo Horse Show last Monday at Santa Ana.

Jose said the Manila Jockey Club management as well as the Philippine Racing Club are also "100 percent" behind the EIA program.



MALAYSIA-BOUND: Francis Casey Alcantara of Cagayan de Oro, Zhane Quitara of Cavite, and Cebu's Sally Mae Siso, Rosalinda Sala and Francis Largo (starting third from left) show off their trophies after topping their respective age-groups in the National Milo age-group championships recently and clinching slots to the Malaysia junior tennis circuit starting Dec. 6. On hand to award their prizes were Malaysia Airlines manager Goh Meng Kheng (second from left), Milo sports executive Pat Goc-Ong (eighth from left), Children's Tennis Workshop head Jovy Mamawal (right) and MAS officer Carmina de Guzman.

NCR, Iloilo booters Under-19 favorites

POWERHOUSE National Capital Region and defending champion Iloilo have been tagged as favorites in the 2004 PFF/Adidas Under-19 Championship, which kicks off today at the University of San Carlos-Technological Center football field in Talamban, Cebu City.

Given strong chances of upending the Metro Manilans and the Barotac Nuevo booters are the Cebuanos and the teams from Davao and Dipolog, the West Mindanao qualifier.

Other teams which advanced to the final stage are Baguio, representing North/South Luzon; Masbate, South East Luzon; and Iligan, North and South Mindanao. Cebu was given automatic qualification for hosting this year's edition.

The event is the official Under-19 tournament of the Philippine Football Federation and is being organized and hosted by the Cebu Football Association headed by Jonathan Maximo. PFF president Johnny Romualdez will be the guest of honor in today's opening rites.

To further drum up interest, the PFF and Adidas are staging a photo and writing contest for the six-day event.

Submitted materials must be published in any local or national newspaper and must be mailed not later than Dec. 15 to the PFF office in Pasig City. The first placer will get P10,000 worth of Adidas items, the 2nd P5,000 and the 3rd P3,000.

SPORTSWATCH

Kaya Football Club gains semifinals

KAYA Football Club scored two victories recently to advance to the Division I semifinals of the NCRFA Globe Handy Phone Super Cup football tournament. Kaya blasted San Beda-Mendiola, 4-1, on Nov. 26 at the Ultra field and then blanked Air Force, 3-0, last Monday to oust the Airmen while improving its record to three wins against one loss. In other Division 1 games, Army shutout Far Eastern University, 4-0, at Ultra to complete a sweep of its four Group B assignments and arrange a semifinal meeting with Group A's No. 2 team; Ateneo dealt Union FC its third straight loss, 4-1, and FEU held defending champion Navy to a 3-3 tie.

La Salle dribblers squeak past CCM

LA SALLE-Taft rallied to beat City College of Manila, 47-43, yesterday in the 12th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym. Down by six points in the last four minutes, the Green Archers turned the tables around with their pressure defense to notch their second win in three outings in Group A. Team skipper Timmy Teves only had four points, but his layup off a steal midway in the fourth quarter triggered an 8-0 binge that reversed the outcome for the Green Archers. Lomer Losentes banged in 14 points in lifting the St. Francis Doves past FEATI, 62-49. Mike Bencito scored 14 points as Rizal Technological University routed AMA Computer College, 76-25.

Cavite 7-cock derby resumes today

THE SEMIFINAL round of the Cavite 7-Cock International Derby resumes at the Cavite Coliseum at 4 p.m. today with 87 fights. The event opened Monday and was topped by the entries of Jun Topacio (JT Emerald), Mayor Nene Aguilar (LCC), Tomas Miscarus of Germany (Alexis Farm), lawyer Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza (Winning Time Jobo), Ronald Singson (Siete Pares 1), Samantha (Pol Estrellado and Boy Royo), Eric dela Rosa (Pasko Sa Pasay 4-Cock Dec. 13), Tony Lasala (SLB Wizard), Rey Castaneda (RC Cardinal Red) and Rene de Guzman/Romy Median (Lucky Rin Firefly Binangonan). For inquiries, call 0918-5674921, 046-9709971 and 046-9704810.

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Race 2—1. Conglomerate 2. Pirouette 3. Take Ten 4. Husay Na

Race 3—1. Gutsy 2. Big Bucks 3. Money Order 4. Longshot Tony

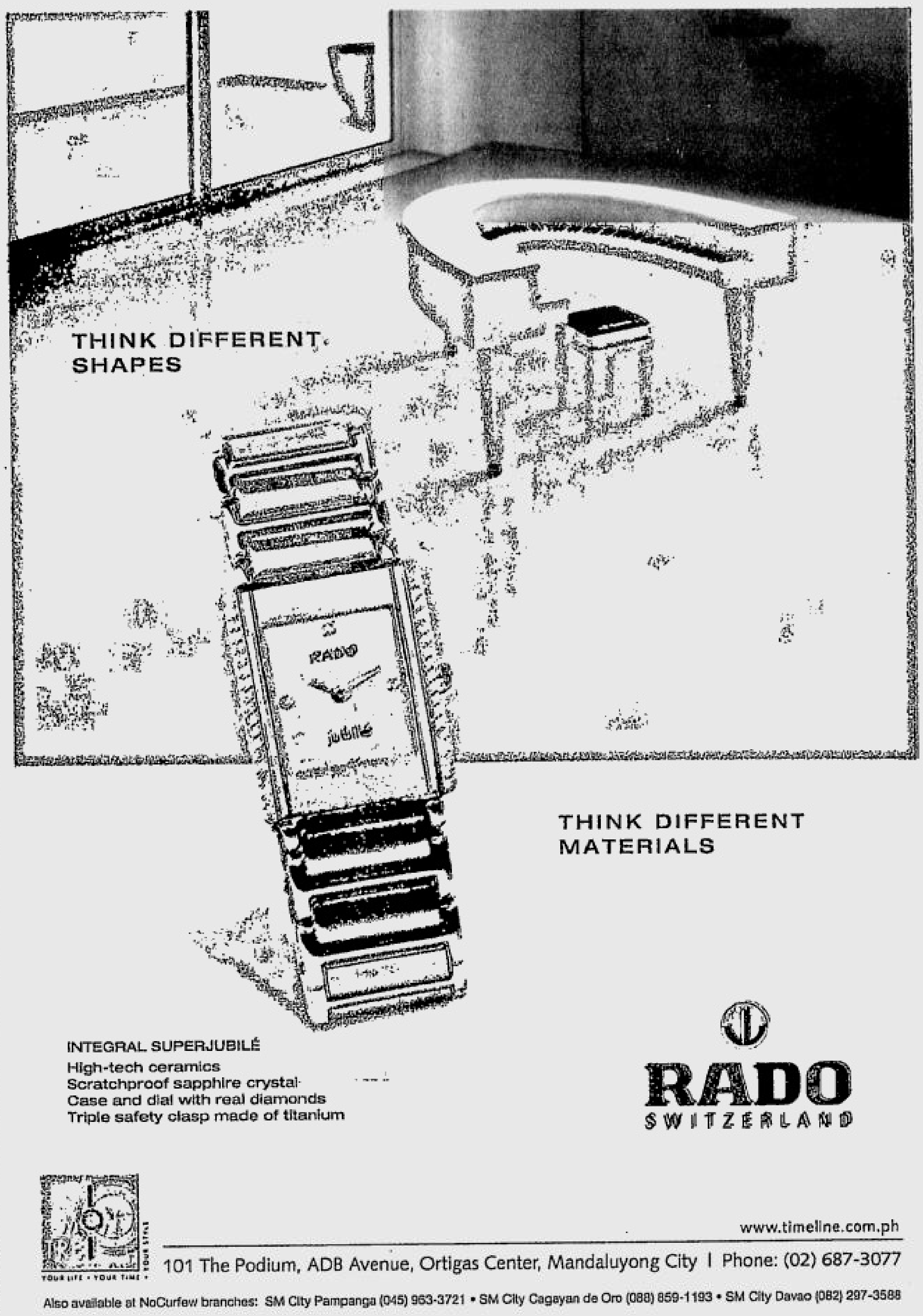
Race 4—1. At All Cost 2. Nico's In Charge 3. Mercury Rising 4. Saint Bernard 5. Extreme Magic 6. Look Who's Playing

Race 5—1. Do It David 2. En Carta 3. Sheza Slew 4. Sand Splash

Race 6—1. Formidable Ella 2. Ocean Cookie 3. La Signorina 4. Dow Jones

Race 7—1. Ocean Wings 2. Voltes May 3. Ocean Menary 4. Noble Win

Race 8—1. Showman/Refreshing 2. Hurry Prince 3. Snow Princess 4. Mr. Bullseye 5. Another Sam 6. War General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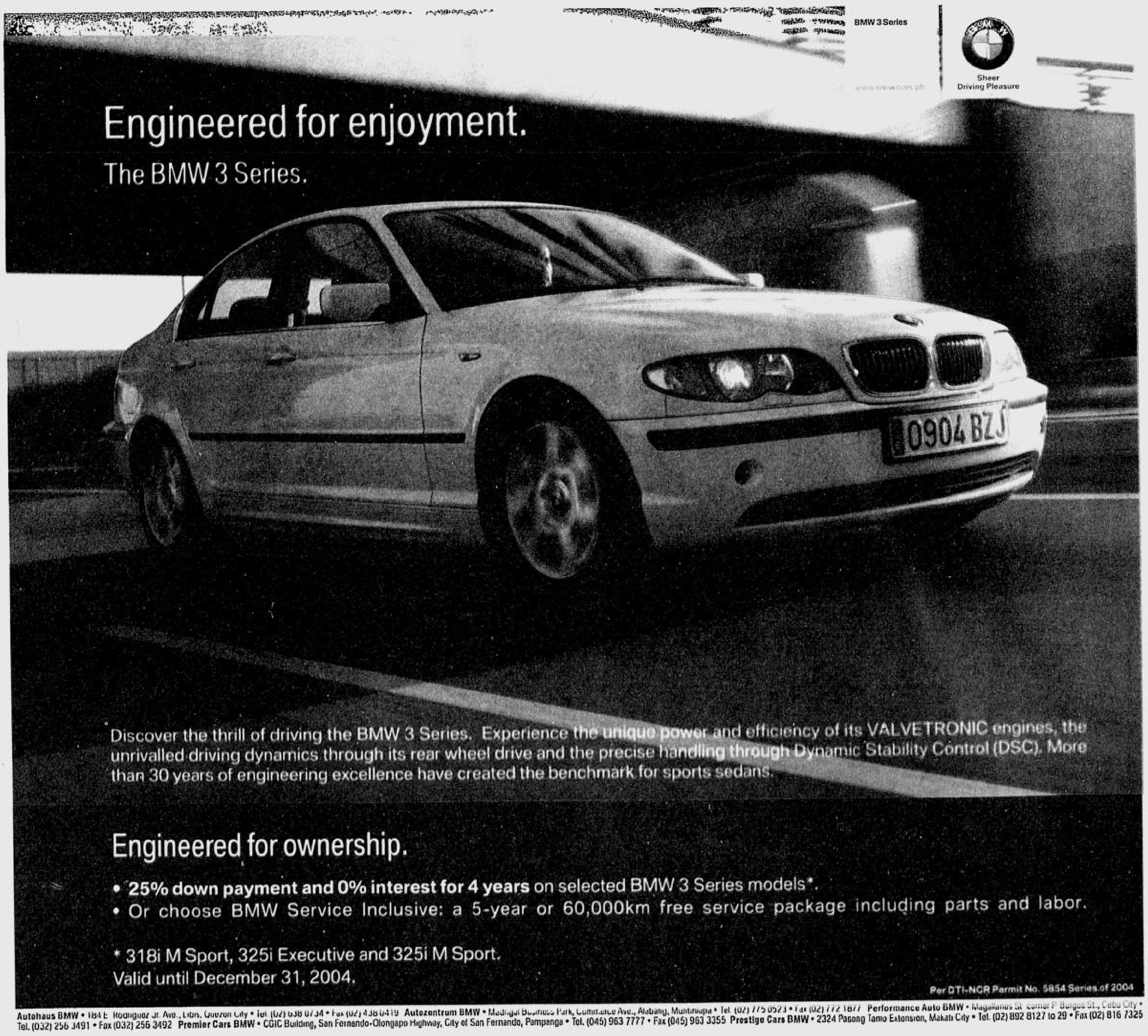
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Also-rans can still make it big in show biz

From page A31

Carolino's new documentary, "Bunso," will be presented by Juvenile Justice Network-Philippines at the UP Film Center on Dec. 10 at 2, 4 and 7 p.m.

Since Ditsi is our best documentarist, this screening is a "must" event for film buffs.

Most dangerous assassin

JENNIFER Garner returns as the title character in "Elektra," who after recovering from the wounds she suffered in "Daredevil" becomes the world's most dangerous assassin.

When she gets her latest assignment, Elektra makes a decision that can take her life in a new direction—or destroy her.

Assigned by the Hard's leader to kill a man and his 13-year-old daughter, Elektra eventually befriends them, and decides to stand up to her ninja peers.

"Elektra" also stars **Goran Visnjic, Terence Stamp, Jason Isaacs** and **Will Yun Lee.**

'Oedipus, King'

SOPHOCLES' "Oedipus, the King" will be staged by Wings Entertainment and Tribo at the Paco Catholic Auditorium on Dec. 4 at 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3 p.m., and Dec. 5 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Performers include **Perry Escaño, Monina Bagatsing, Imee Fernandez, Harvey Quiwa, Ces Aldaba** and **Guio Respall. Francis Villacorta** directs. Call 524-8454.

'Yogi's Christmas'

AT 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 11, the Cartoon Network screens "Yogi's First Christmas." In the film, trouble is brewing in Jellystone National Park. Yogi Bear and friends must find a way to stop the park's lodge from becoming part of a highway project by spreading the Christmas spirit, all the while stepping out of Ranger Smith's sights.

Movies on Cinemax

DEC. 1 at 4 p.m., "Cool Hand Luke." Dec. 2 at 12:45 p.m., "Strictly Ballroom." Dec. 3 at 7:30 a.m., "Fahrenheit 451." 11 p.m., "The Assignment."

Movies on HBO

DEC. 1 at 5:30 p.m., "Lone Star." Dec. 2 at 9 p.m., "Anger Management." Dec. 3 at 10:45 p.m., "Red Dragon." 12:45 a.m., award-winning original HBO series "Carnivale," episode title, "Insomnia."

Rare Elvis tapes not saleable

LOS ANGELES—A batch of Elvis Presley's earliest RCA recordings from nearly 50 years ago failed to meet the minimum asking price at auction last week, but lesser keepsakes from the King of Rock 'n' Roll fetched more than $6,000.

The highlight of the two-day sale by auction house Bonhams and Butterfields was a private collection of six reel-to-reel tapes of Presley valued at between $30,000 and $50,000.

The "pre-master" recordings included never-before-heard versions of such hits as "All Shook Up" and "Jailhouse Rock" as well as studio banter among the singer, members of his band and the engineer who recorded them, Thorne Nogar.

It was Nogar, working under contract for RCA, who ended up in possession of the reels and whose family put them up for bid through Bonhams & Butterfields. Nogar died in 1994.

Reuters

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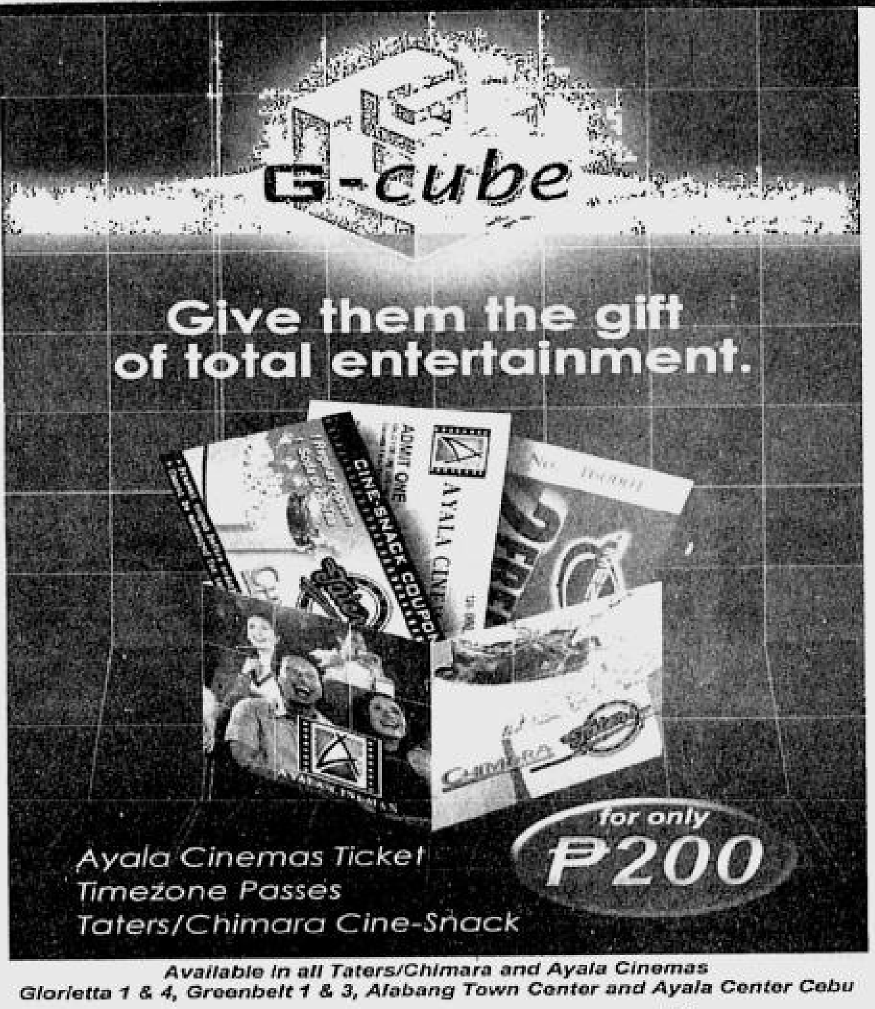
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Also-rans can still make it big in show biz

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN THIS country, everybody loves a winner. If you're a loser, forget it, because everybody automatically consigns you to the ash heap reserved for has-beens, neverweres and also-rans.

Happily, there are a few exceptions to this desultory and cynical role. Take **Freddie Aguilar's** song, "Anak": It failed to place in the first Metropop, but ended up becoming a much bigger hit, not just here but also abroad, than any of the songs that have won in that song competition through the years.

Aiza Seguerra is another "loser" who soon proved that the unimpressed judges of the Little Ms Philippines kiddie TV tilt were wrong. She placed only fifth in the competition, but she became one of our top child stars, with hit TV shows, films, the works.

Even after her child-star luster dimmed when she became a teenager, Aiza again proved her detractors wrong by reinventing herself into a hit recording artist and concert performer. That's a double victory for the gutsy girl who wasn't expected to get anywhere in show business!

Last year, **Sandara Park** lost out to Hero Angeles in the finals of the "Star Circle Quest" talent discovery competition. This year, however, she's become a bigger star than Hero, with hit TV shows and numerous product endorsements to her name.

Recently, she was conceded to be the main reason that the Star Cinema teen flick, "Bcuz of U" became a major blockbuster. Next up for Sandara should be a solo movie, to definitely prove her bankability as a film star (after she's taught to really act well).

What makes Sandara so popular with teen fans? She's very young, so many adolescents and young teens identify with her—and, since so many Filipinos are young, that means she has a big share of the local mass audience all tied up around her little pinkie.

Also boosting Sandara's success is her being Korean and Asian "invasion" of the Philippine entertainment scene. So, it may be said that Sandara is lucky because she came along at precisely the right time.

Some people are even saying that Sandara's impact on young fans is reminiscent of the phenomenal outpouring of support that **Nora Aunor** enjoyed when she was also in her young teens.

We don't know about that, but Sandara is this show biz season's most popular teen star. That may no longer be the case next year if another young fave arrives on the scene, but it isn't likely that Sandara's mentors will give up her advantage without putting up a really big fight!

Painting session

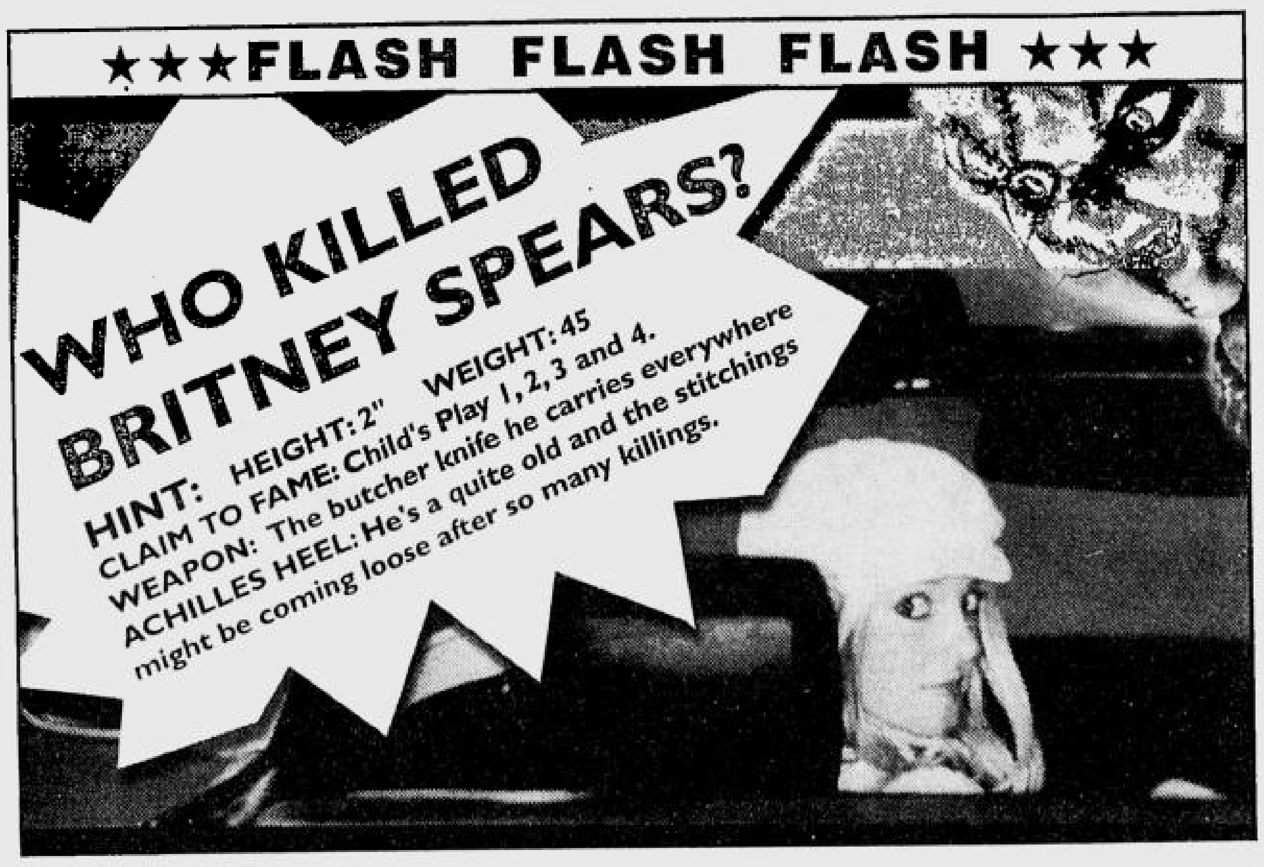
THIS December, **Heidi Sison** and her Character Building Foundation will spearhead a project that involves painters from the Angono Ateliers headed by **Nemiranda**.

It's an on-the-spot painting session focusing on the character values that CBF is encouraging companies, organizations, families and individuals to adopt as their own touchstones. Call 890-5321.

Premiere screening

THE PREMIER screening of **Ditsi**

ALSO-RANS/ A30


★★★FLASH FLASH FLASH★★★
WHO KILLED BRITNEY SPEARS?
HINT: HEIGHT: 2" WEIGHT: 45
CLAIM TO FAME: Child's Play 1, 2, 3 and 4.
WEAPON: The butcher knife he carries everywhere
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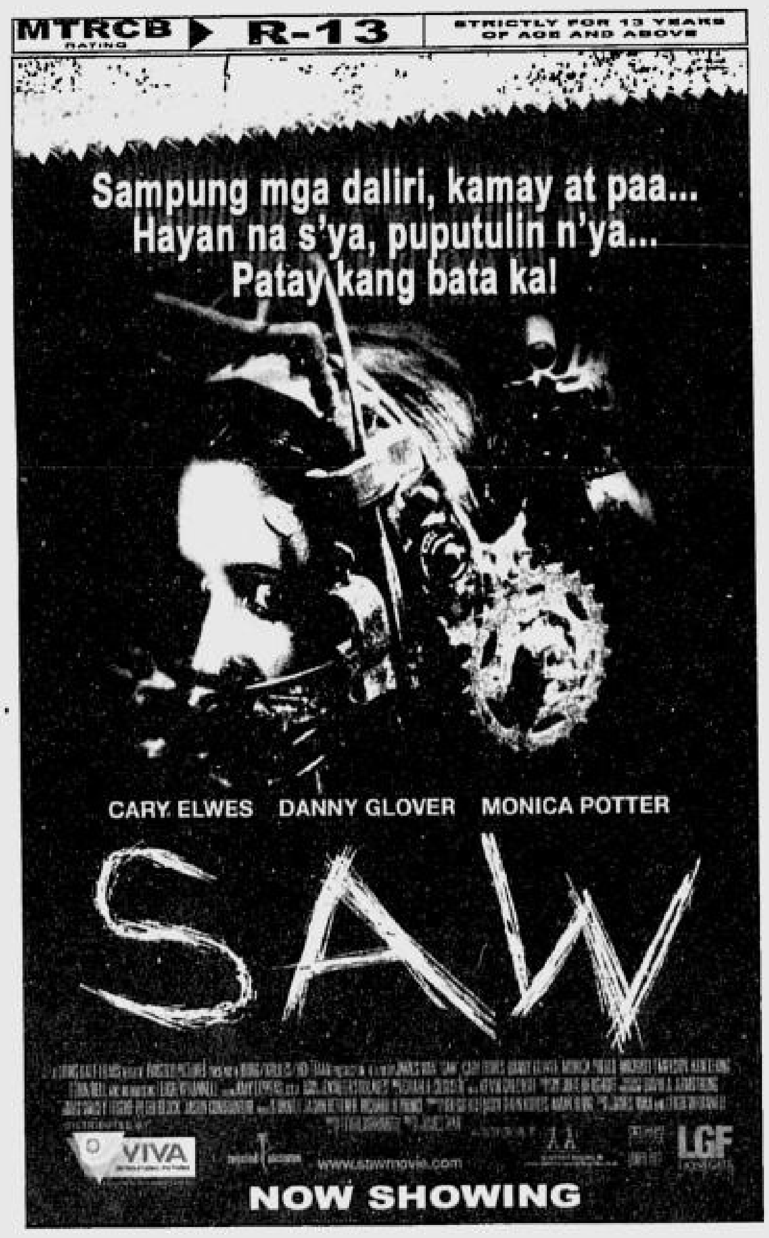
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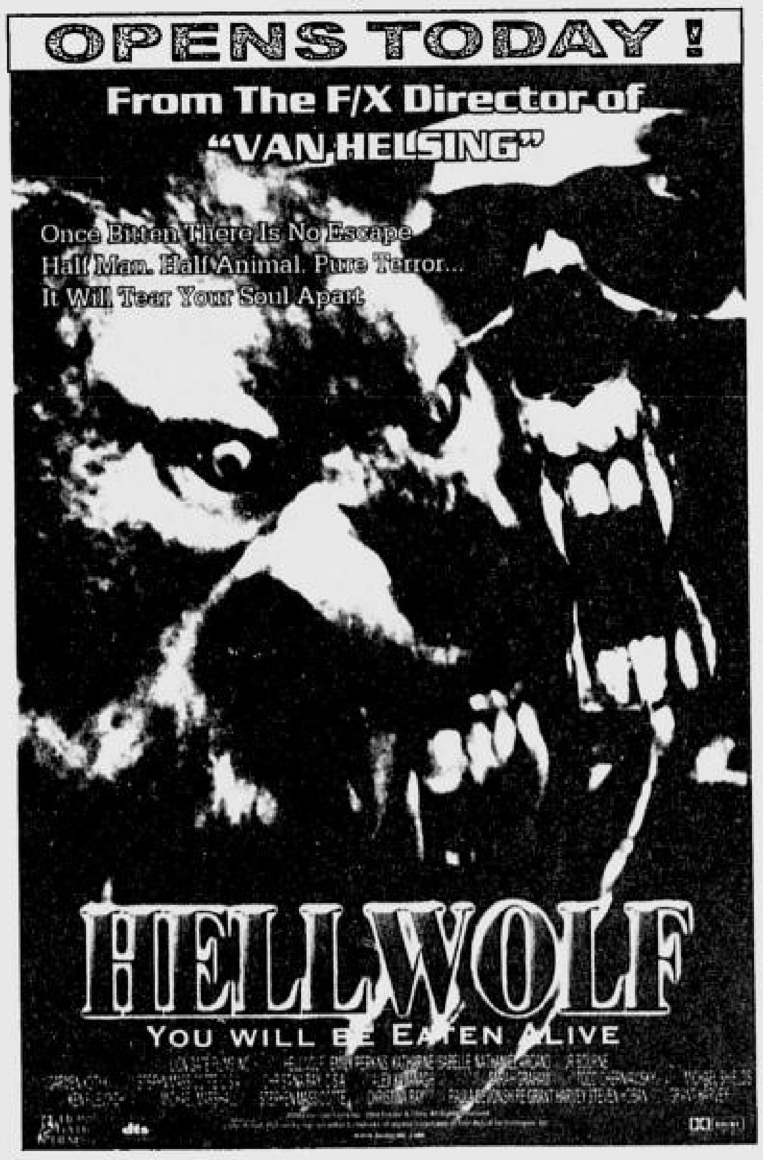
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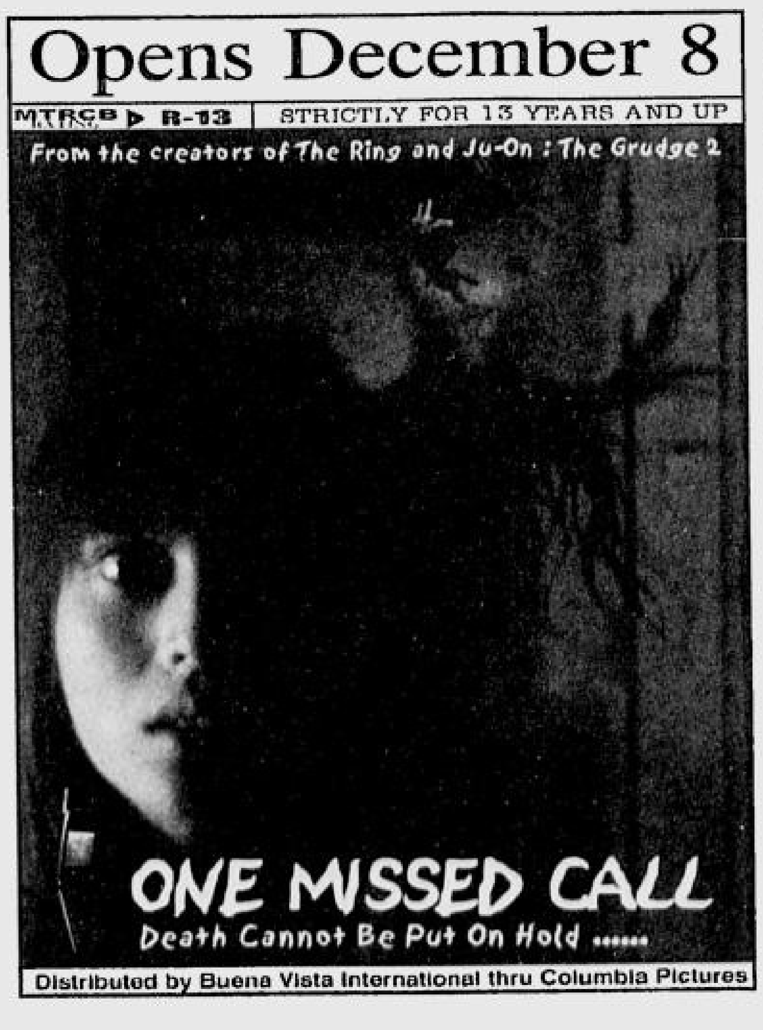
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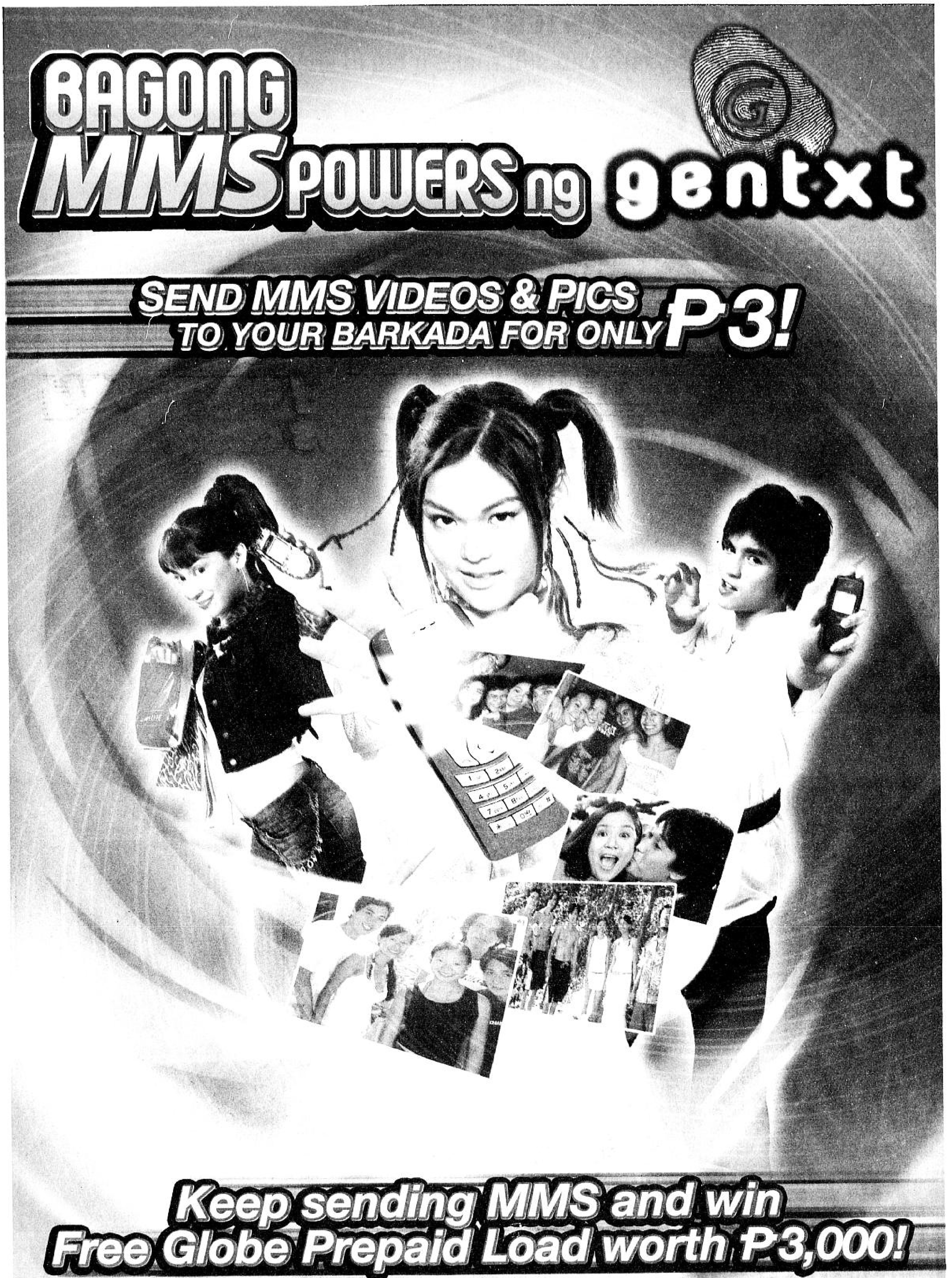
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HE GIVES to his grown-up kids

'Petty things,' not money, cause Dolphy-Zsa Zsa fights

By Nini Valera

DOLPHY will still marry longtime live-in partner Zsa Zsa Padilla as soon as the court grants her petition for the annulment of her marriage, according to the couple's spokesperson.

But Nene Riego, the spokesperson, admitted that the couple is having problems—although not over money. A movie producer told INQUIRER Entertainment last week that the reason for the constant fights was Dolphy's continued financial support for his grown-up children.

"Zsa Zsa knew from the start that Dolphy was supporting some of his children," Riego said in Filipino. "She is working and spending her own money. She has nothing to do with Dolphy's money."

It has been this way since the two became domestic partners 16 years ago, Riego added. "He gives her grocery money and he pays for the household bills. But he can do what he wants with (the rest of) his money... like give it to his children."

Dolphy has 16 children from previous relationships: Manuel, Salud, Junior, Freddie, Edgar, Rolly, Mariquita, Carlos, Geraldino, Edwin, Rommel, Ronnie, Eric, Jana, Jeffrey, Vandolph. And then there are Zsa Zia and Nicole, his and Zsa Zsa's daughters.

'Usual' arguments

Riego said she knew all along what was causing the couple's fights, which intensified in the last year. "You know, the usual petty things that couples fight about," she said. She did not elaborate, apart from denying that a third party was involved in the brewing tension. But she was optimistic. "I'm sure they can work out their problems sooner than later."

SHE SPENDS her own earnings

Talk about the couple's imminent split grew more insistent last week, as tabloid columns published speculative innuendos on a supposed breakup.

People close to the couple have consistently denied the rumor, even while conceding that the couple was fighting more often. Zsa Zsa claimed in a television report that she and Dolphy still slept in the same bed.

Eric, Karylle incredulous

Eric Quizon, Dolphy's son, told INQUIRER Entertainment last Thursday he didn't think any part of the split-up scenario was true. "Where did you get that information?" he demanded when asked about the issue in a phone interview.

The actor-director also said the taping for "Home Along Da Airport" was packed up last week but only because of a minor hitch that had nothing to do with his dad.

Young singer-actress Karylle, Zsa Zsa's daughter by her dentist husband Modesto Tatlonghari, likewise denied on nationwide TV that her mother and the comedian had parted ways.

Riego said Tatlonghari is still contesting Zsa Zsa's petition for annulment. The petition is pending in the Office of the Solicitor General, the spokesperson added.

She also debunked suspicions that the supposed breakup was a gimmick, referring to something that Zsa Zsa's personal assistant, Nene Atillano, told an INQUIRER Entertainment source last week.

"That's a very ugly gimmick," Riego stressed.

Inquirer Entertainment is still being denied access to Dolphy and Zsa Zsa. But Riego promised to arrange an interview "when it is already possible."

In an interview last year, Dolphy said he was hoping Zsa Zsa's annulment would be granted "while I am still alive, because he wanted to walk her down the aisle "while I can still (do that) without a cane."

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'Alexander' fails to conquer last week's US top 10

LOS ANGELES—Director Oliver Stone's epic "Alexander" failed to conquer the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend at the box office, where "National Treasure" was still finding gold, early figures showed on Sunday.

Nicholas Cage's treasure hunt steeped in a mystery around the American Revolution was expected to earn $46.2 million from Wednesday through Sunday—bringing its total earnings in two weeks at the cinema to $87.9 million, box office-trackers Exhibitor Relations said.

With the extended weekend, box office figures covered five days instead of the usual three.

The Disney-Pixar film "The Incredibles" landed in second place with about $33.2 million. The computer-animated spoof of comic book heroes has earned some $214.7 million in North American ticket sales since opening four weeks ago.

The comedy "Christmas with the Kranks"—starring Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis—opened in third with $32 million.

Another computer-animated film, "The Polar Express," featuring the voice of Tom Hanks, took in $27.1 million.

"The Sponge Bob SquarePants Movie," based on the popular television cartoon, followed with $23.4 million.

The much-hyped biopic "Alexander"—starring Colin Farrell as Alexander the Great—opened in sixth place with $21.6 million after being panned by critics.

Oscar-winning actress Renée Zellweger landed seventh with "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason," taking in $9.1 million.

Johnny Depp's "Finding Neverland" followed with $6.3 million, while the Ray Charles bio "Ray" earned $5 million.

Pierce Brosnan's crime caper "After the Sunset" rounded out the top 10 with $4.5 million.

Expected

In Stockholm, Sweden last week, Stone said he expected his three-hour epic to get a better welcome in Europe.

Stone visited the Stockholm International Film Festival (SIFF) to pick up a lifetime achievement award and promote "Alexander," which was to have its European premiere there on Thursday.

"I think one of the reasons I am being honored here in Sweden is that (Europeans) tend to see me a little differently than they do in the US," Stone told reporters ahead of the European premiere.

He said the film "is not an easy movie, but then I've never made easy movies."

His previous films include "JFK," "Born on the Fourth of July" and "Platoon."

"Alexander" chronicles the life of the young Macedonian warrior-king Alexander the Great, who conquered most of the known world some 2,300 years ago.

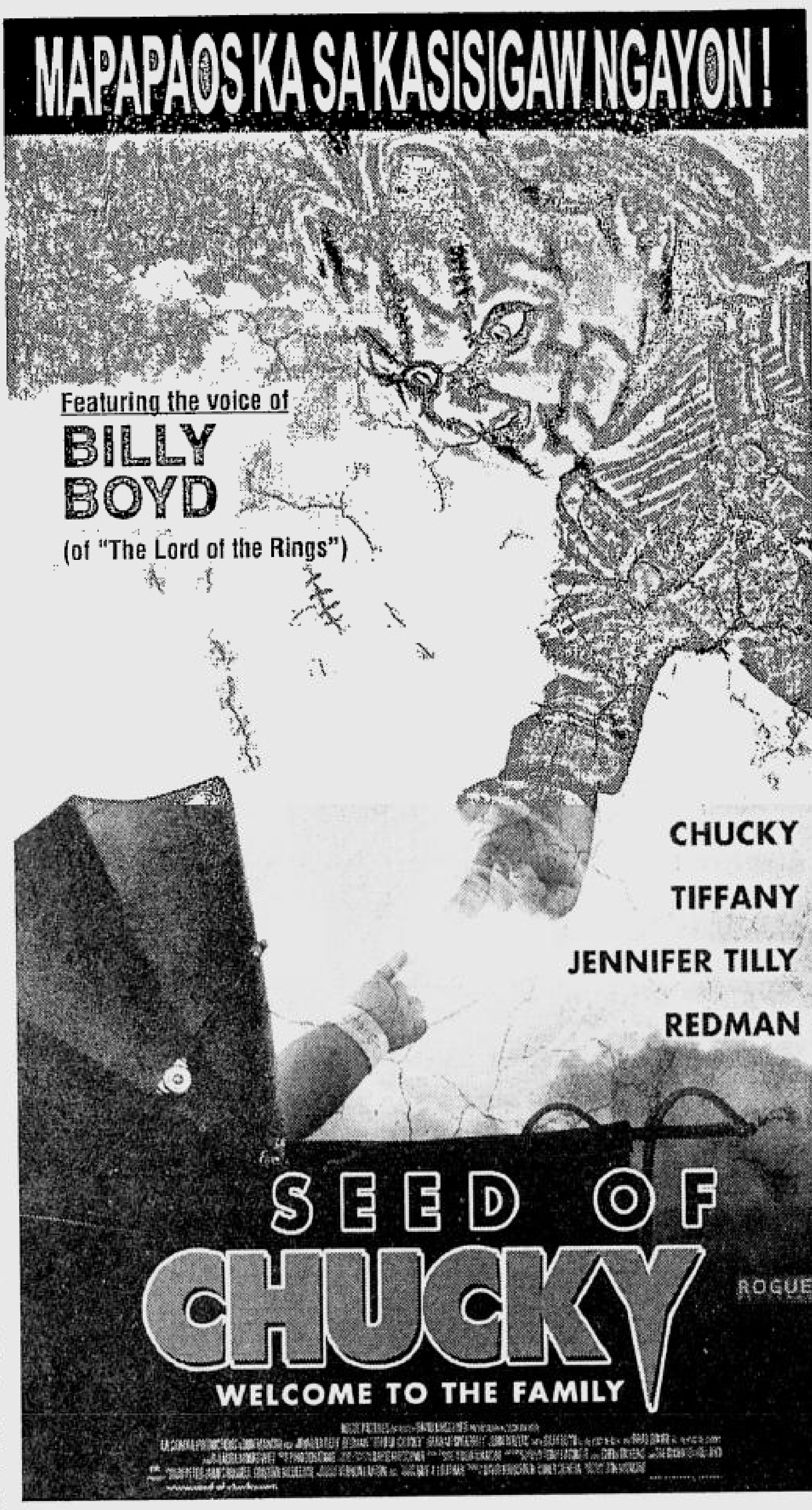
At seven kilograms (16 lbs), the SIFF lifetime achievement trophy is touted as "the world's heaviest film prize."

The festival jury said Stone was being honored for a "fearless exploration of individual lives affected by the modern-day America," and said Stone "has challenged mainstream norms."

With the release of "Alexander," several observers have drawn parallels between Alexander the Great's attempt to extend his empire into the Middle East and the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. Stone acknowledged that there are "incredible parallels" between Alexander and Bush—such as both having fathers who were world leaders, and whose work they've tried to build on—but that the movie was not meant to highlight them.

The 15th SIFF screened more than 160 movies from 40 countries.

AFP, AP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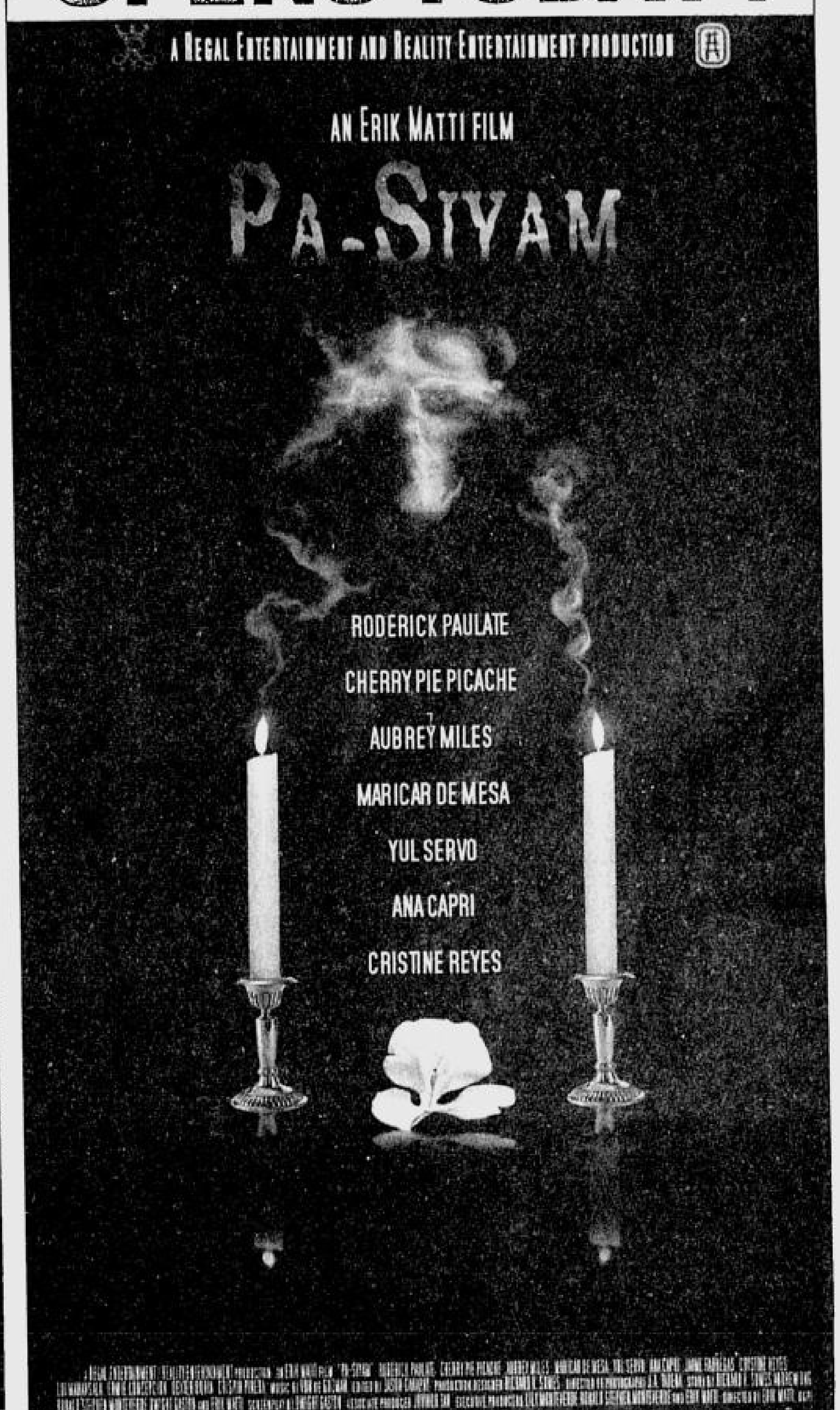
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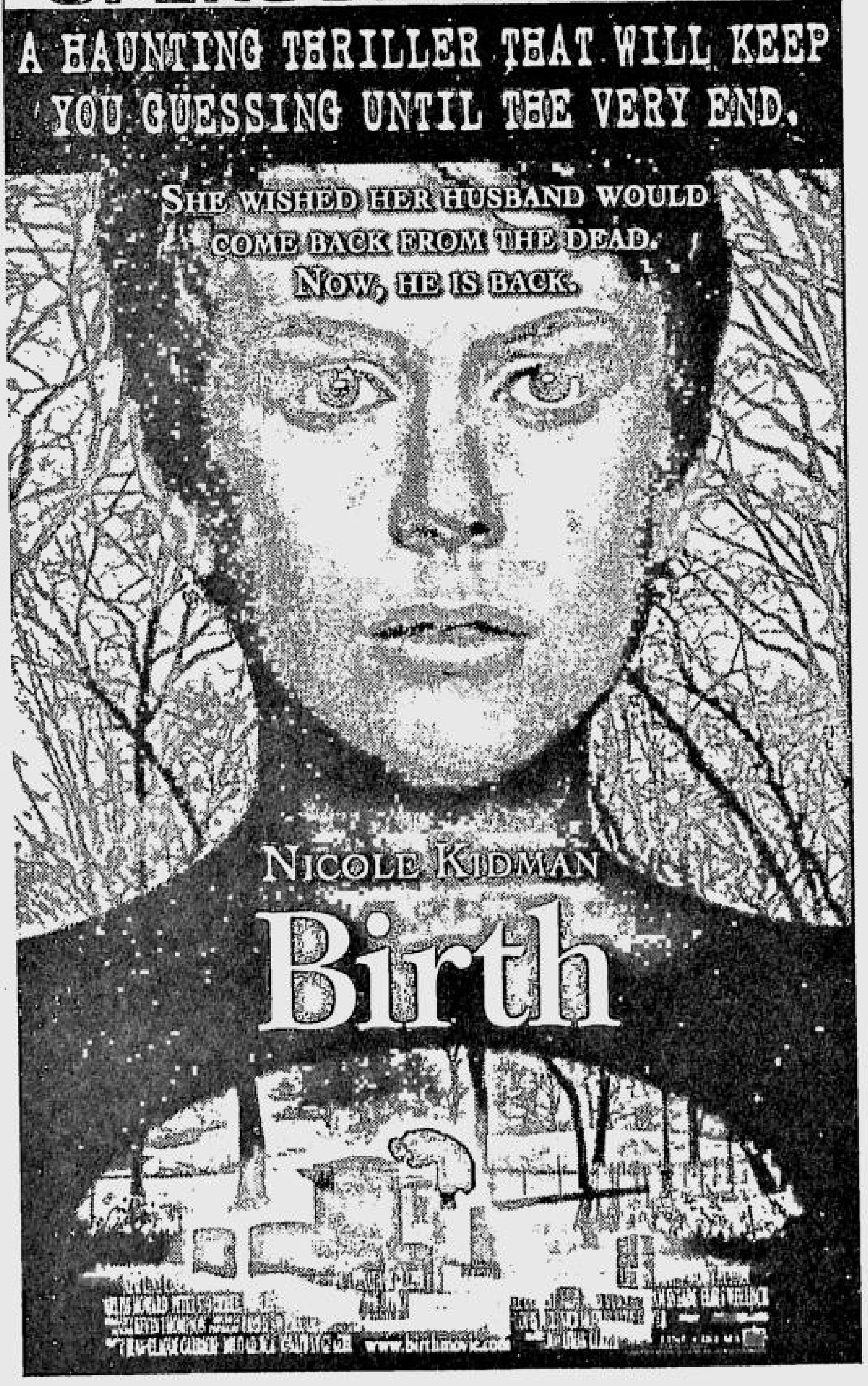
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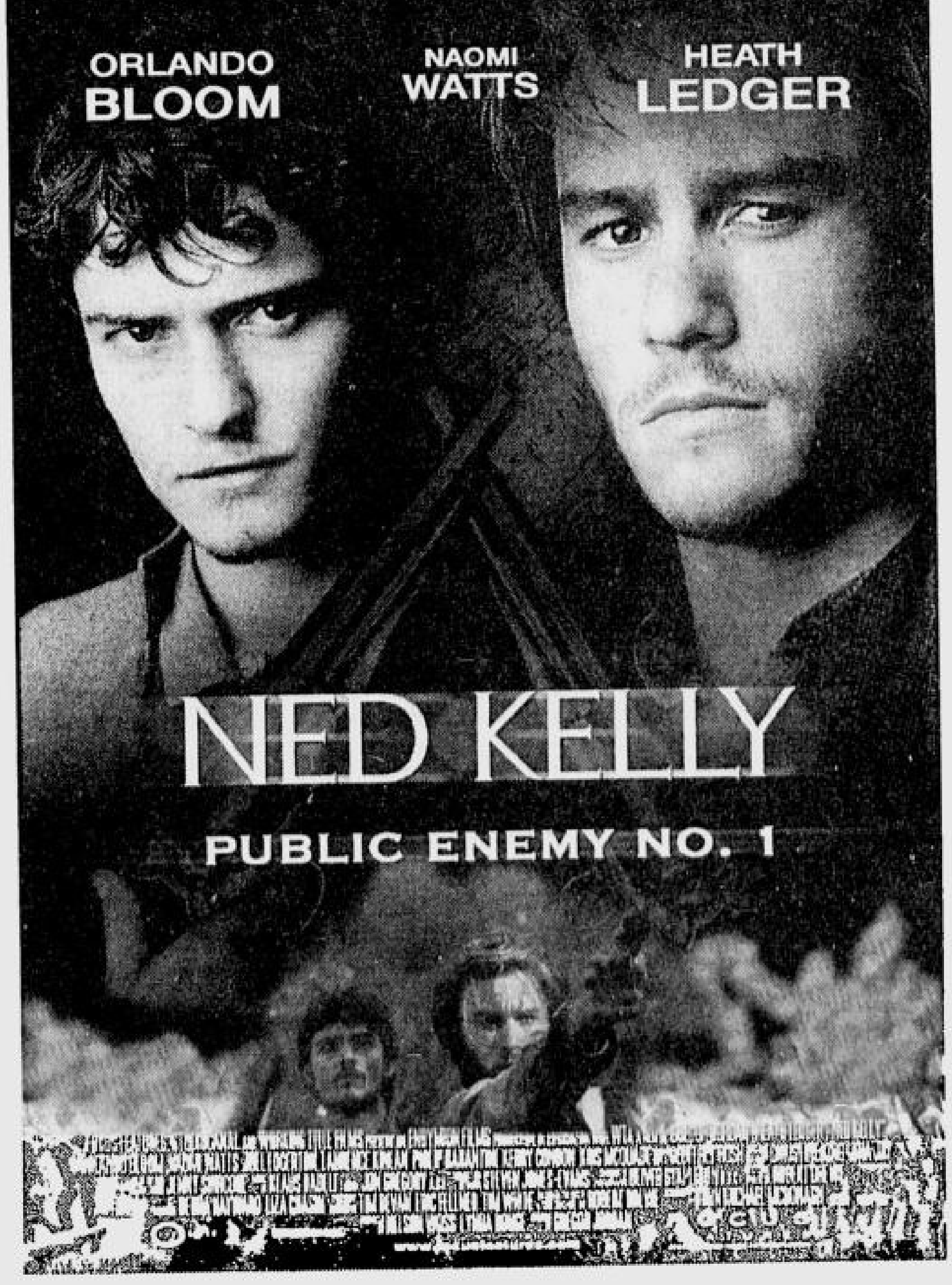
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Adult site sues Google over nudes

LOS ANGELES—A website that sells photos of naked women is suing Google Inc., alleging that the online search engine leader is destroying its business by distributing links and passwords that provide free glimpses of the nude models.

Beverly Hills-based Perfect 10 Inc. is seeking unspecified damages from Mountain View-based Google for alleged copyright infringement.

Google spokesperson Steve Langdon declined to comment Monday, saying the company hadn't seen the suit yet.

The civil complaint, filed late last week in Los Angeles Federal Court, revolves around some of the graphic imagery found through Google's search engine.

Perfect 10 says Google is providing unauthorized access to thousands of its copyrighted pictures. The company charges a monthly membership fee of $25.50 for its website.

Google displays the images from rogue websites operated in foreign countries, according to Perfect 10's lawsuit. The search engine also provides links to password hacking sites that provide ways to gain illegal access to Perfect 10's website, the suit alleges.

Perfect 10 publisher Norm Zada said he is targeting Google because the company is using the allure of naked women to draw more visitors to its site and generate more advertising revenue.

He said he fears his company, which claims 100,000 unique visitors a month to its website, will be driven out of business unless Google is forced to stop distributing the "free peeks."

Google earned $195 million (euro 149 million) on revenue of $2.16 billion (euro 1.66 billion) through the first nine months of this year. *AP*

GMA 7 Inc. announces promotions

GMA Network Inc. has announced the promotion of six officers.

Promoted to senior vice president were Wilma Galvante for entertainment and Marissa Flores for news and public affairs. New vice presidents are Antonio Leduna for engineering, Jessica Soho for news, and Regie Bautista for program support. Ianessa Valdellon was named assistant vice president for public affairs.

Galvante was VP for entertainment prior to her promotion. She has been with GMA for over 11 years and spearheaded numerous projects in her department since 1993.

Flores was previously VP for news and public affairs. She joined the network over 14 years ago, successfully guiding the news organization to the top of the ratings charts.

Leduna was the OIC for engineering. He has been with the company for almost six years.

Soho is the most-awarded broadcast journalist in the country. Her newest show was recently launched. She served as acting director for news and public affairs.

Bautista has been with GMA for almost two years. The former OIC for program support, she has been responsible for the network's strategic on-air promotional plugs and print advertisements.

Valdellon used to be production unit manager of various top-rating and award-winning public affairs programs like "Extra Challenge," "Imbestigador," "Wish Ko Lang," "Kay Susan Tayo," and "Out!"

Goofy was more like it

From page A2-4

sued truth (in our art)," he replied. "This way we didn't have any arguments. We thought as one because of Rep. Whether she was my director or I was her director, there was only one star, and that was Rep."

Leo, who's now director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines and mainstay of Channel 7's sitcom, "Idol Ko si Kap," said he shared the principle of simplicity with his late colleague. "We both preferred talking straight to the point and shunned luxuries. We led simple lives. That's why I never allowed myself to be affected by the trappings of show business. The spirit of theater has stayed with me. I always tell my children, 'You should find a job that you love and you'll never have to work for the rest of your life.'"

Bibot's temper—and apparent toughness—was legendary. "She taught me and Subas (Herrero) how to play poker," Leo said. "And she was so good at mahjong, she could tell the tiles apart using her toes." Not to forget her appetite for alcohol: "*Lintik uminom 'yan* (Boy, did she drink)."

Leo insisted that this was all just because she rarely wanted to show her gentle side. "Deep down, she was a such a softie."

2ND WEEK - NOW SHOWING
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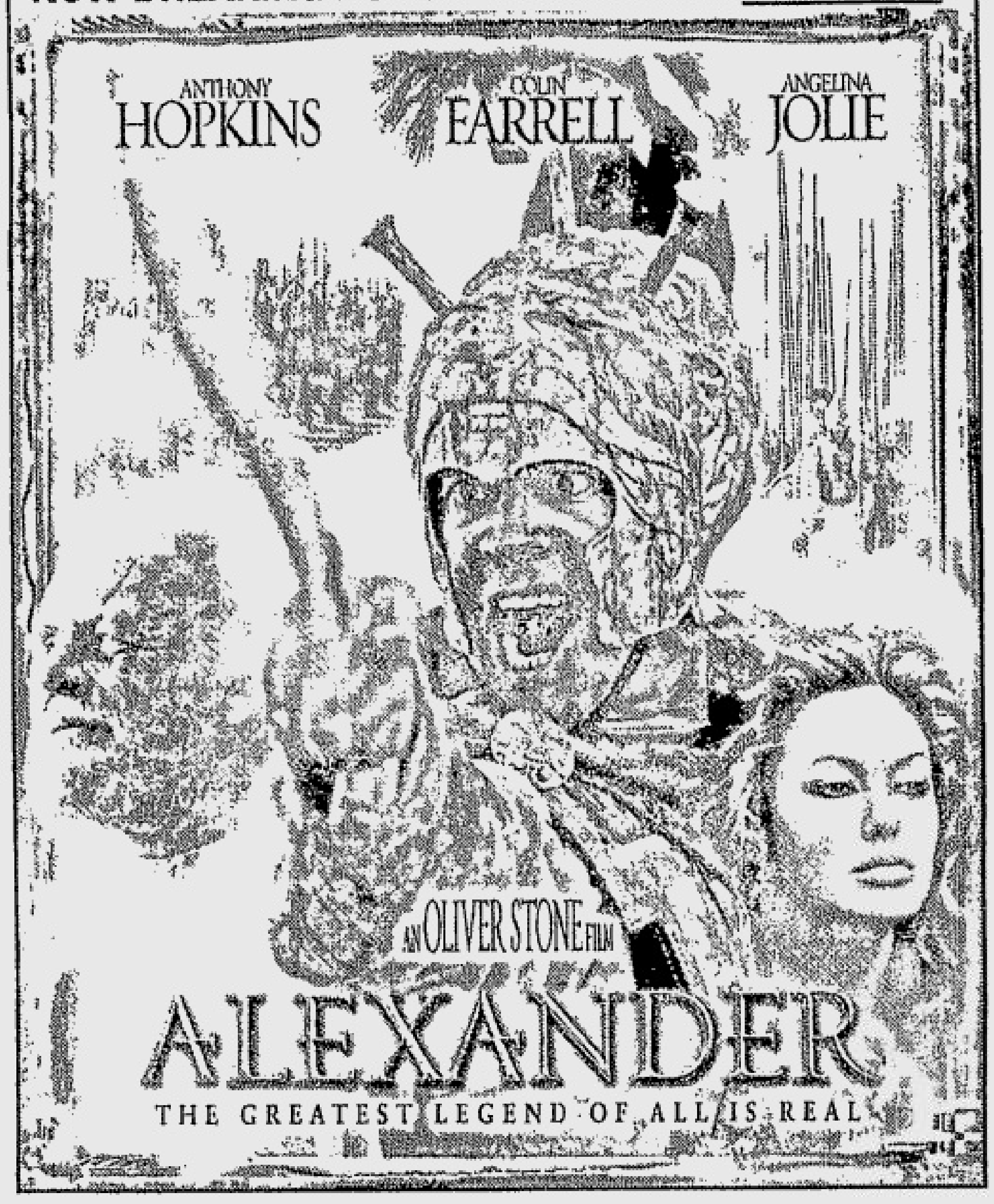

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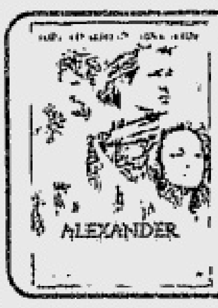

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SM Bacoor Cinema 3
SM Iloilo Cinema 6
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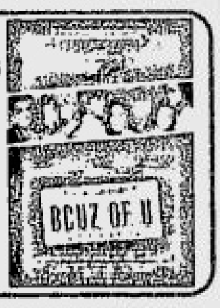
SM Davao Cinema 5
SM Batangas Cinema 4
SM Bacoor Cinema 4
SM Cebu Cinema 7
SM Lucena Cinema 4



THE INCREDIBLES MTRCB Rating: G
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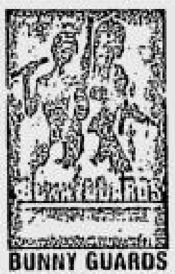

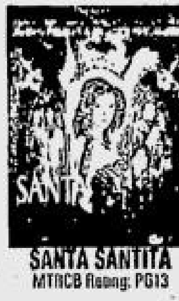

BUNNY GUARDS SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Pampanga Cinema 4
SM Davao Cinema 4

NATIONAL TREASURE MTRCB Rating: G
SM Iloilo Cinema 3
SM Pampanga Cinema 6
SM Marilao Cinema 4
SM Batangas Cinema 1
SM Davao Cinema 6
SM Bacoor Cinema 5
SM Cebu Cinema 8
SM Lucena Cinema 1

THE POLAR EXPRESS MTRCB RATING: G
SM Batangas Cinema 3
SM Bacoor Cinema 7

SANTA SANTITA MTRCB Rating: PG13
SM Bacoor Cinema 1

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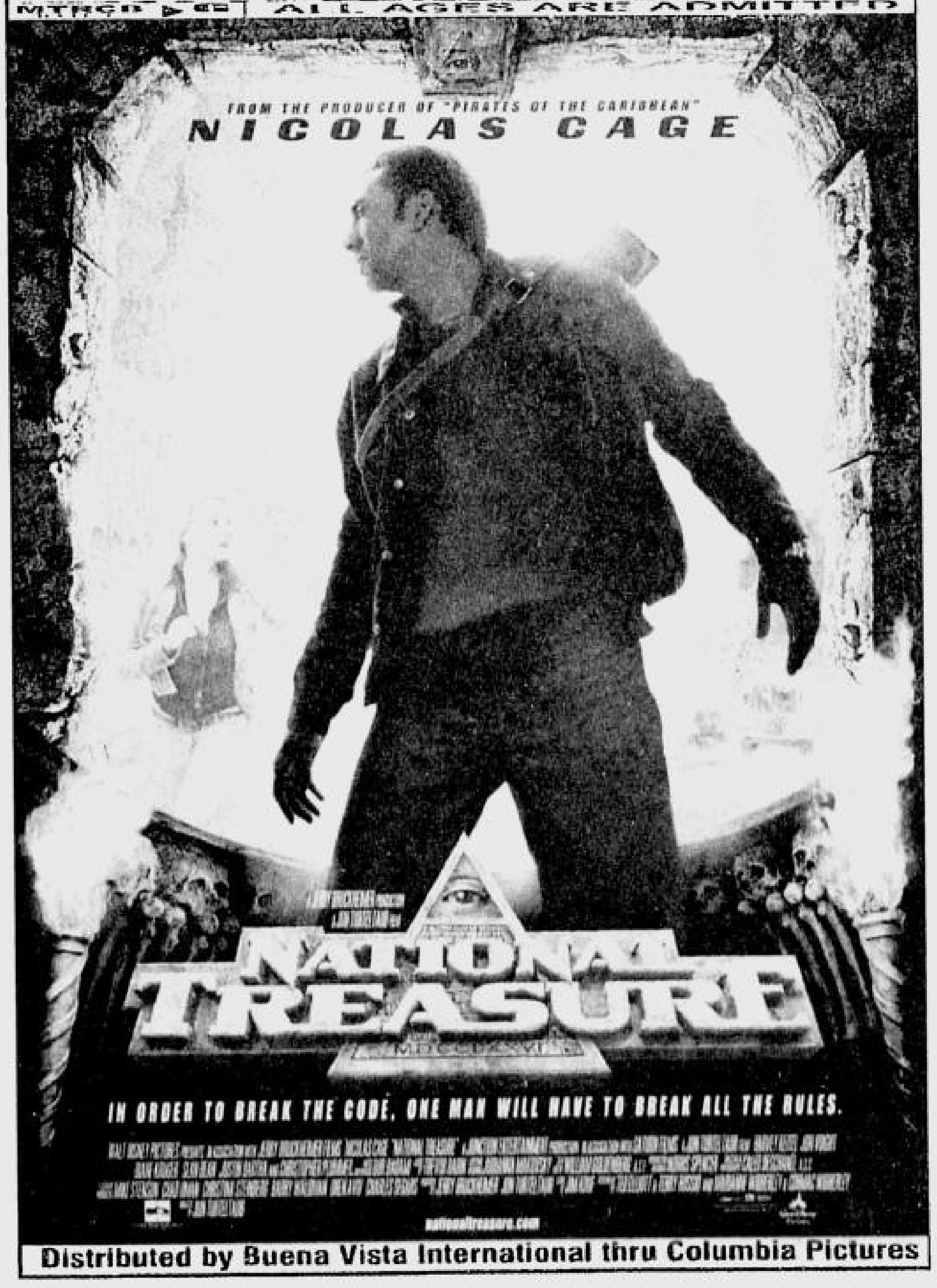
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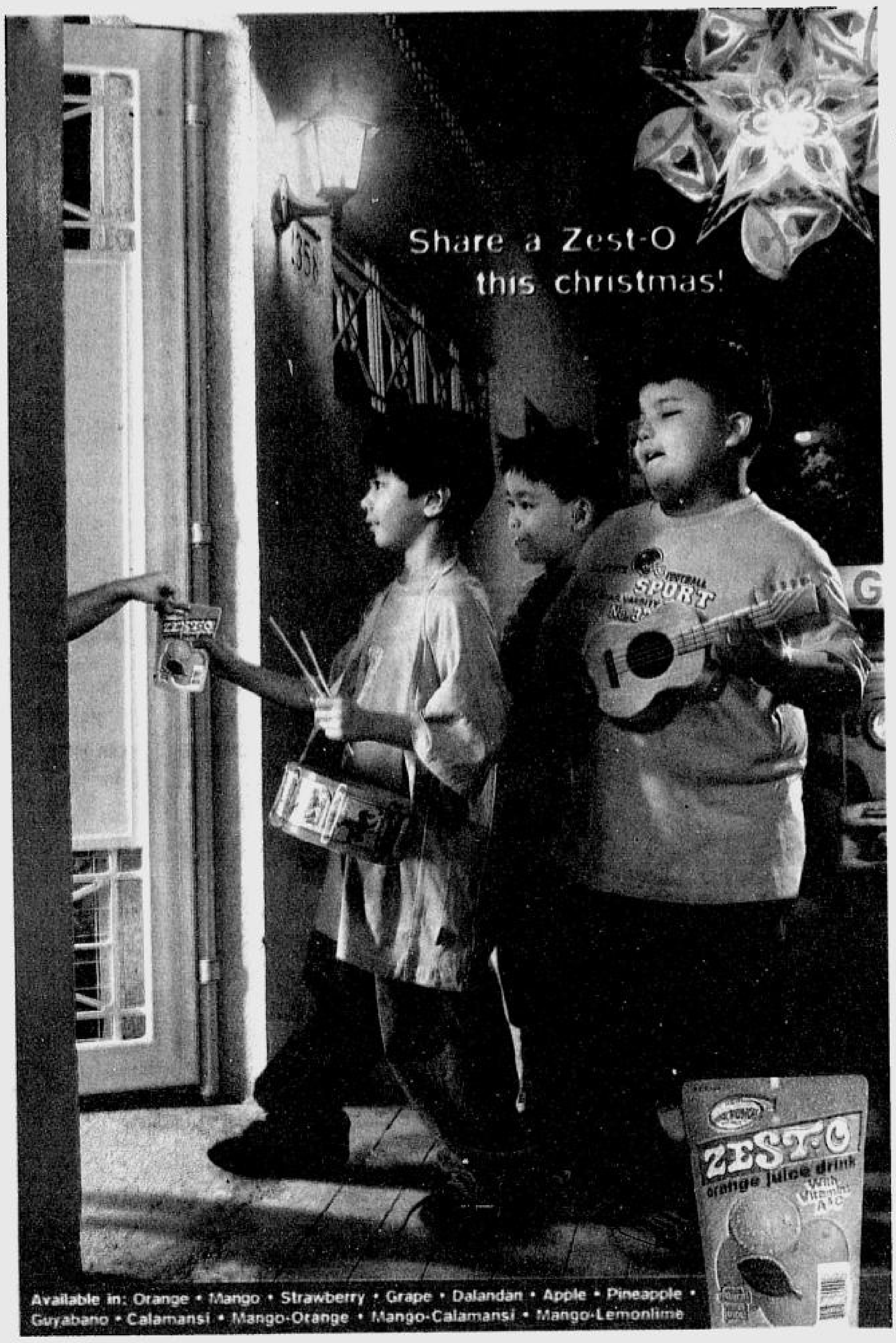

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ENTERTAINMENT

Goofy was more like it

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

MARTINEZ: "For us there was always just one star—the Rep," founded by Amador.

"DON'T linger at curtain call."

This is just one of many words of wisdom imparted to actor Leo Martinez by his friend, theater great Zenaida Amador, who passed away last Sunday afternoon. The two founded Repertory Philippines in 1967 along with Baby Barredo and Tony and Monina Mercado.

Through the years, Rep has built a name staging topnotch classic and contemporary plays, as well as musicals.

"*Ngayon nag*-bow out *na, e, 'di tapos na* (She has bowed out, it's over for her). She didn't like fanfare. She was a very simple person," Leo said of his fellow actor and director during an interview with INQUIRER Entertainment on Monday.

He said he met Zenaida, or "Bibot," as she was fondly called, through Fr. James Reuter on the set of "Santa Zita and Mary Rose." They worked on several productions. After "Camelot," they decided to put up Rep.

So much fun

The five founders were then joined by Peque Gallaga, Mitch Valdes, June Keithley, Susan Calo-Medina, Tommy Abuel, Laurice Guillen, Chinggoy Alonzo and the late couple, Rolando Tinio and Ella Luansing.

Leo recounted many memorable experiences with Bibot. "*Panay kalokohan 'yan* (she was goofy)," he said. "I was only 21 when we founded Repertory and she was 33. I was the youngest of the five original members. I just came out of college."

During Rep's first season, Leo remembered the group having a budget of P800 per production, and still had to borrow money because the funds were insufficient. The actors weren't paid until years later when the company could finally afford it. "We got P50 per performance," he said "but we had so much fun."

While doing "Who's Afraid of Viriginia Woolf?" Leo recalled, Makati—where the theater was located—was so flooded that only seven people turned up in the audience. Still, they had to perform, since they had a rule that the show should go on if there were more spectators than actors, and it was a small cast of four.

Enter Don Jaime

It turned out that Don Jaime Zobel was in the audience that night, and he apparently loved the show so much, that he gave Rep free use of the venue, the Insular Life Theater.

One day, fire broke out on the second floor of the Insular building as Leo and company were on stage. "We were supposed to make a calm announcement for the audience, but the announcer panicked and so did everybody. Bibot told us to leave at once and we did while still in costumes. So we ran down the stairs in different stages of undress as we tried to change into our street clothes."

Although Leo decided to concentrate on his TV and movie career in the '80s, he said he never really left Rep. But he only returned to theater work for Rep's 1998 restaging of "Amadeus," which also marked his 30 years in the acting business. Bibot was his director once again.

What was it like working with Bibot?

"We were students of acting and we both pur-

GOOFY/ A2-3

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, December 1, 2004

MONDAYS 10:00 pm
MON-FRI 6:30 pm
POPS!
ABC
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SENTRO
with Ali Sotto and John Susi

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Krystala	Hiram	It Might Be You	Lovers In Paris	Yes Yes Show			Insider	Special Assignment
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Muscon Cup 2003				MMDA On The Road	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game Bol	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Look Who's Talking		Phil Badminton Tournaments	Billboard On-Air		
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Rune Soldier	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin (7:50 PM)		Starstruck (8:50 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:20 PM)	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Direct Line		Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Invader Zim	Entertainment Tonight	Malcolm In The Middle	Still Standing	8 Simple Rules	Scrubs	Girls Behaving Badly	Hidden Hills	Newswatch Now	Cerge For Truth		
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Global Family Series		Unawin Natin		D.E.N.R.		Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
Solar		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Streetfighter	Skeleton Warriors	Samurai Jack	Heavy Gear	Invisible Man		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		WWE Experience	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Knock First	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	Good Morning Miami	For Love Or Money		Meet My Folks		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Studio 23								Batman Animated Series	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	Mr Bean	C.S.I.	Angel	Alias		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN		Fear Factor		Alias		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Rave	Rave	Boomtown		The Amazing Race		CSI: Miami		Fear Factor		Alias	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Baywatch Hawaii		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Just Shoot Me	Ed		Philly		Third Watch		Just Shoot Me	Ed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Passport		Taboo		Rite Stuff	Young Global Hot Shots	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Passport		Taboo	
Solar Sports		World Championship Kickboxing		ATP Stockholm Open '04 SF2				FIVB Beach World Tour Rio de Janeiro WF1			NBA Special: The Pistons Reign		NBA TV Daily	Detroit vs. Houston Rockets (replay)					
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		E-News Weekend		Nigella Bites II Simple Food	Fine Living Special		Planet Parent	Good Eats
HBO	Fletch			Murder In Greenwich			Lone Star				Balto 2 The Wolf Quest (7:40 PM)			Stuart Little 2			The Ring (10:20PM)		
Star Movies		Dead Heat			Dancing In The Dark	Frank McKlusky, C.I.			Rambo 3 (7:20 PM)			The Recruit				Last Samurai (10:55PM)			
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN			Acc/Big Ten Challenge '04 USA				Acc/Big Ten Challenge '04 USA				Goals!	Sportscenter Taiwan	Pool/Snooker World Pool League '04 Holland Pro Billiards '04 Trick Shot Magic NV, USA		Pro Billiards '04 Int'l Challenge of Champs USA		Sportscenter Taiwan		
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Double Obsession			Cool Hand Luke				Scenes Of The Crime			Second To Die			Nuts				The Perfect Weapon	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Mystery Of Natalie Wood				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Adoption		Burn			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Electric Man		The Girl With The X-Ray Eyes		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines		MTV Dyes		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Supahstar				TRL		Room Raiders	One Bad Trip	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus									Pac 10 College Stanford vs UCLA!										
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

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5 Japan IT firms to locate in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FIVE Japanese information technology companies have firmed up plans to locate their offshore operations in the country, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said the firms were setting up businesses here to engage in software development and engineering as well as web-enabled services.

The Japanese companies are MSI Co. Ltd., Tokyo Kyoso Computer Inc., Unico Technos Co. Ltd., Iris Co. Ltd. and You-Net Co. Ltd.

Hernandez did not say how much investment was coming in, but he said these projects showed the predisposition of mostly medium-sized Japanese companies to look for investment locations outside their country.

"These firms have seen the (Philippines') skilled manpower especially in computer programming and web-based proficiency," he said. "They have seen that our expertise can match their production requirements."

The five Japanese companies were just the latest batch among Japanese firms that have appreciated the country's potential as an outsourcing base, Hernandez said.

Last year, there were six companies that decided to invest here: Astra Philippines Inc. in a software development venture at the Ayala Technology Park in UP Diliman, Quezon City, and Asking Philippines in Antel Global Corporate Center in Ortigas; United Publishers Inc. in the electronization of IT documents in Cebu; Nihon Design Engineering Co. Ltd. in engineering design; 10art-ni and e-Venture Support also in software development.

Hernandez urged local IT firms to improve their competencies and make themselves more attractive to foreign investors since the latter were scouting for more joint ventures in the sector.

He said Filipino companies needed to be competitive in other factors that the Japanese also considered such as cost-efficient production and Japanese language skills.

Last week, the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions said efforts to position the country as a destination for outsourced IT-based services would be given a boost through e-Services Philippines, the country's biggest IT-enabled services (ITES) and outsourcing expo to be held in February 2005.

The trade fair will feature the country's best global ITES providers in six key areas: animation, business process outsourcing, contact centers, medical transcription, software development, and engineering and design.

In October, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said local industry trends showed that within six years, revenues of ITES businesses could approximate that of semiconductors.

Semiconductor exports were expected to post $19 billion in sales receipts or 45 percent of the country's total export revenues this year.

PAL refleeting starts with new Airbus 320

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Airlines yesterday said it was expecting the arrival today of a newly leased Airbus 320, one of several 156-seater planes PAL would use to start upgrading its domestic fleet.

PAL president Jaime Bautista said the flag carrier proceeded with an "interim refleeting program" while it was still deciding whether to tap Airbus or Boeing planes for its 10-aircraft modernization program.

He said the flag carrier aimed to upgrade at least 10 of its 13 aircraft servicing domestic routes. PAL has a fleet of 30 airplanes for its local and overseas flights.

A refleeting, according to Bautista, would boost the airline's efficiency so it could improve its service to customers. The use of newer planes would allow a faster turnaround time, which was essential in improving PAL's on-time performance, he pointed out.

The lease agreement with a well-known foreign leasing company to cover the interim re-fleeting would not be on a long-term basis, according to the PAL president.

"We are timing the end of the interim leases with the time the supplier, whether it is Airbus or Boeing, could deliver the 10 aircraft we need. They said it would take two to four years before they could do that," Bautista said in an interview.

PAL/ B2

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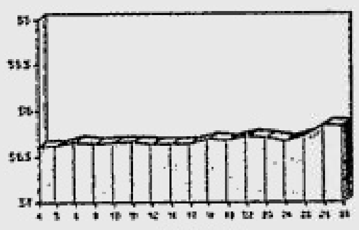

NOVEMBER

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As of 5 p.m., Nov. 30, 2004

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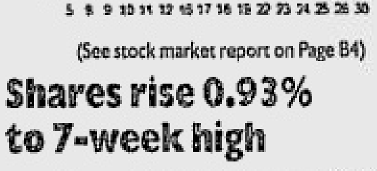
per ounce Hong Kong, Nov. 30, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

NOVEMBER



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares rise 0.93% to 7-week high

SHARE prices closed 0.93 percent higher yesterday at a seven-week high, with sentiment given a boost by strong growth figures for the third quarter, dealers said.

Some investors, however, were quick to take their profits, which erased some of the early gains.

The market's advance spurred talk of an earlier-than-expected Christmas rally when domestic consumption is expected to increase in the holiday season.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 16.86 points to 1,830.96, after trading between 1,814.08 and 1,841.11.

Volume was 922 million shares worth P928 million, against 1.13 billion shares worth P5.28 billion Friday. The market was closed Monday for a public holiday.

Gainers beat losers 45 to 22. The broader all-shares index rose 2.78 points to 1,164.25. AFP

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PAL refleeting . . .

From page B1

He said PAL was still choosing between A-320 and the new generation Boeing 737. He said a decision would be made shortly so that PAL could order the planes under a combination of lease and purchase deals.

"Even if we lease, we are renting almost brand-new planes. The ones we are leasing now are about 6 months old," Bautista said.

A lease on one of PAL's aircraft expired in November and another lease lapsed last year. By next year, five PAL leases would end and another four leases would expire in 2006, he said.

Bautista said the company was still evaluating the proposals of both Airbus and Boeing, denying that the flag carrier had a bias for the European aircraft maker.

PAL's rival, Cebu Air Pacific of the Gokongwei group, had committed to purchase 12 Airbus units for about $350 million over the next three years starting 2005. Cebu Pacific would also lease two Airbus planes.

Bautista said there were pluses and disadvantages in leasing.

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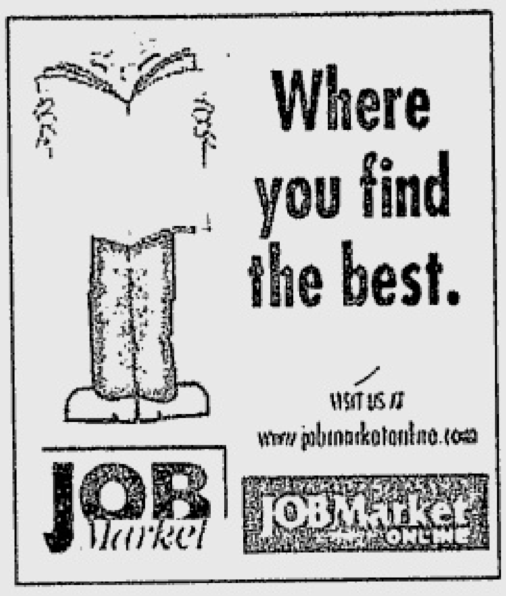
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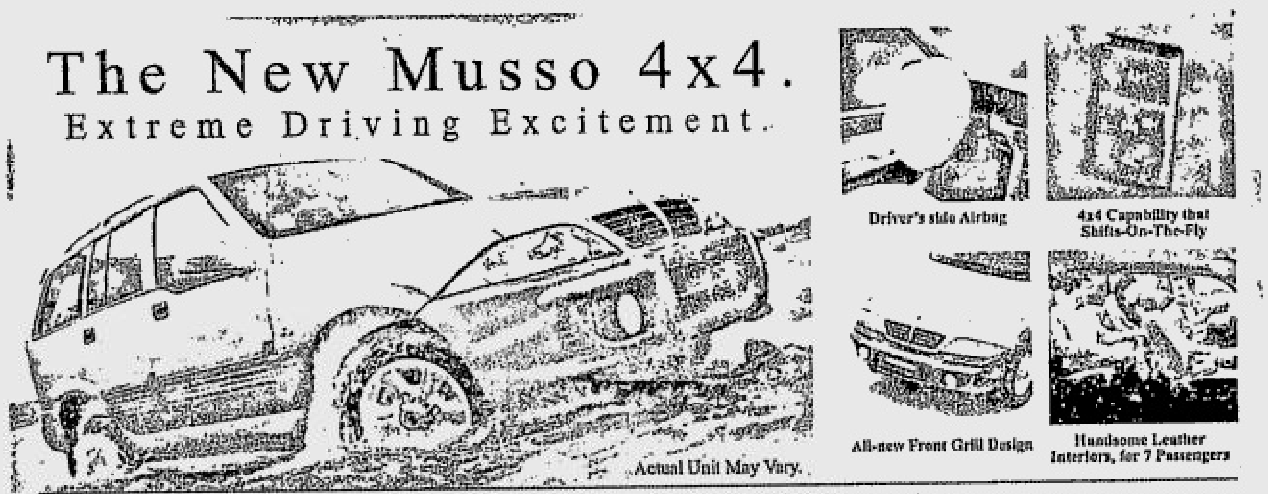
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Market gets Moody

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

MOODY'S is arriving in the Philippines today for the Thriller in Manila. They will study the economic data and decide whether to downgrade our bonds, already rated as junk. Ron Moody, who played FAGIN in the musical 'Oliver' many years ago, will lead the team. He will probably sing his verdict as follows:

"I'm reviewing the situation
And it looks to me as being very bad.
Of all the countries, which are Asian,
I think this is the worst we ever had.
The deficit's in billions,
Unemployment is in millions
And the debt has now reached trillions,
So I think I'd better downgrade it again.
The next verse is even verse:
The Congress and the Senate,
Watered down the cigarette and liquor bill.
Only ten billion, not nineteen billion,
It's enough to make the President feel ill.
Jeepney drivers are all striking,
Diesel prices they're not liking
But oil companies still hiking.
So I think I'd better downgrade it again.

ELTON JOHN, if you happen to be reading this article, I would like to give up stockbroking and write lyrics for your songs instead.

Turning now to Iraq, they are planning to hold an election by Jan. 30, 2005. There are three main factions, the Shiites, the Sunnis and the Kurds. The Shiites are hoping it will rain because they don't want a sunni day. But if the sunnis win, then the shiite will really hit the fan. As for curds, they will go their own whey. Iraq my brains trying to think up these puns.

I remember reading about some Arabs who had pitched their tents in the desert for the night when suddenly there was a sandstorm. One poor man was wandering around outside trying to find his wife. He could hear her calling but could not see her so he yelled, "What bedouin?" At night, it is cold but during the day, the heat is in tents.

* * *

JOE de Venecia has promised that before the Senate recesses for three weeks on Dec. 17, they will pass four bills and the remainder early next year. I hope he is right because MOODY'S will probably be leaving around that time so that they can be home with their families for Christmas. If nothing has been done or only one bill passed, then I feel we will be due for a downgrade.

If this should happen, it will be disastrous because the government has been forced to absorb Napocor's P3.5-billion debt, which means that the budget deficit for next year will be increased. A downgrade will mean that it will be even more expensive to borrow abroad, assuming that anyone will lend us the money.

Before the inclusion of Napocor, the government intended to raise 78 percent from the domestic market and 22 percent from overseas. Now they have stated that they will have to borrow at least 50 percent from abroad. That is not going to be easy and our creditors will force us to raise taxes in an effort to reduce the budget deficit. That is why the next few weeks are critical and the stock market is likely to remain cautious until these bills are passed.

An increase in excise tax on petroleum products will come into force on Jan. 1, 2005, and automatically increase prices unless crude oil futures fall. The franchise tax on telecommunications companies will probably be passed on to consumers, but the success of the SUN 24/7 promo may make that impossible to implement. Just look at the rise in DGTL in recent weeks.

The amnesty tax, which Sen. Mar ROXAS is so vociferously against, should be renamed the lunacy tax as it will cost the country money. It contains a provision whereby tax evaders, exposed by lifestyle checks, will be able to claim amnesty and keep most of their ill-gotten gains. I am sure this bill will pass in record time.

I looked up the lateral attrition tax in my Webster dictionary and it indicates that tax collectors have to operate while lying on the floor. The government will reward (bribe) those officials who extort more money from tax dodgers. So it will depend on which party offers the biggest percentage to the tax collector. If you can't beat them, join them.

For the country's sake, I hope that both Houses will pass these bills quickly and also reduce their pork as a sign of good faith. Already, the Senate has waived P1.3 billion and Sen. LACSON has not taken any pork for the past three years, yet 20 members of the House had the temerity to ask for an increase. They are simply being pig-headed.

Not all the news is bad. The 3rd quarter GDP rose by 6.3 percent, more than expected, and for 2004, the economy should grow by 6 percent. Credit for this performance is largely due to the agricultural section, which with the help of a good weather produced a bumper harvest. This may not recur next year as scientists are saying that El Niño is with us and will last for six months so prepare for a water shortage next year.

The dollar is falling like snow and has hit a record low against the euro. This makes it very difficult for Europe to export to the United States or China, and the European economy is suffering from high unemployment, slow growth and excessive deficits. Their only advantage is that oil is considerably cheaper for them to buy because the euro is worth around $1.33. Still, I think they will do their best to prevent it rising above $1.35.

Similarly, Japan is also suffering as the country's domestic market remains in the doldrums so that any recovery from the 12-year-old recession has to be export-led. With the yen now down to 102 to a dollar, exporters' profits are being drastically eroded. I am sure that the Japanese government will sell their currency to prevent the yen from falling below 100.

China is happy because its currency remains pegged to the dollar so that as the dollar depreciates, so does the yuan. The trade deficit with China is largely responsible for the monthly $50 billion deficit so something has to give. There are rumors that China is selling US treasury bonds and if this is true, it will force up the yields, effectively increasing the rate that the FED will have to set. In any case, with the record number of jobs being created, GREENSPAN will continue increasing rates to 3 percent next year in an attempt to slow down the economy and prevent inflation. I think 2005 will be a difficult year for everyone.

The Koreans are selling the won by the ton to stop it appreciating further. They are using them to make won ton soup. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Sun Cellular targets 2M subscribers in '05

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN Cellular of Gokongwei-owned Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc. is targeting to grow its subscribers to two million by the end of 2005 from about 1.2 million by year's end, the company's top official said.

Digitel president Lance Gokongwei said the company would spend $100 million in the coming year to expand the coverage of Sun Cellular.

He said the company wanted to become the "Walmart" of the local telecom industry that could offer the best deals to subscribers.

The 19-month-old third player is cashing in on its late-mover advantage, which Gokongwei said allowed it to put up the infrastructure at a much lower cost.

He insisted the company had not been talking with any foreign investor even as stock market players continued to speculate that the listed parent firm Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. could be in loose talks with Hong Kong's Hutchison Telecommunications.

Digitel shares closed at P1.90 yesterday from P1.84 Friday. It was among the top traded stocks with a volume turnover of 49.7 million shares. Gokongwei holding firm JG Summit Corp. had been riding on Digitel's uptick. JG Summit closed at P3.75 from P3.35.

"By the end of the year we would have spent $350 million for Sun Cellular with about 1,300 cell sites by yearend. By the end of 2005, we would have spent $450 million with about 1,900 sites," Gokongwei said in a recent roundtable discussion with the INQUIRER.

Gokongwei said the funding for the rollout would largely come from European credit facilities. Digitel had tapped European contractors Alcatel and Ericsson to install most of its facilities.

He said Sun Cellular broke the one-million mark in terms of subscribers after the Oct. 1 launch of the 24/7 unlimited prepaid and postpaid plans.

Plan 24/7 costs only P250 each month and as low as P100 for 10 days for prepaid customers. With 24/7, Sun Cellular subscribers could text and talk within the network without limit for the availed period, whether 10 days or 30 days.

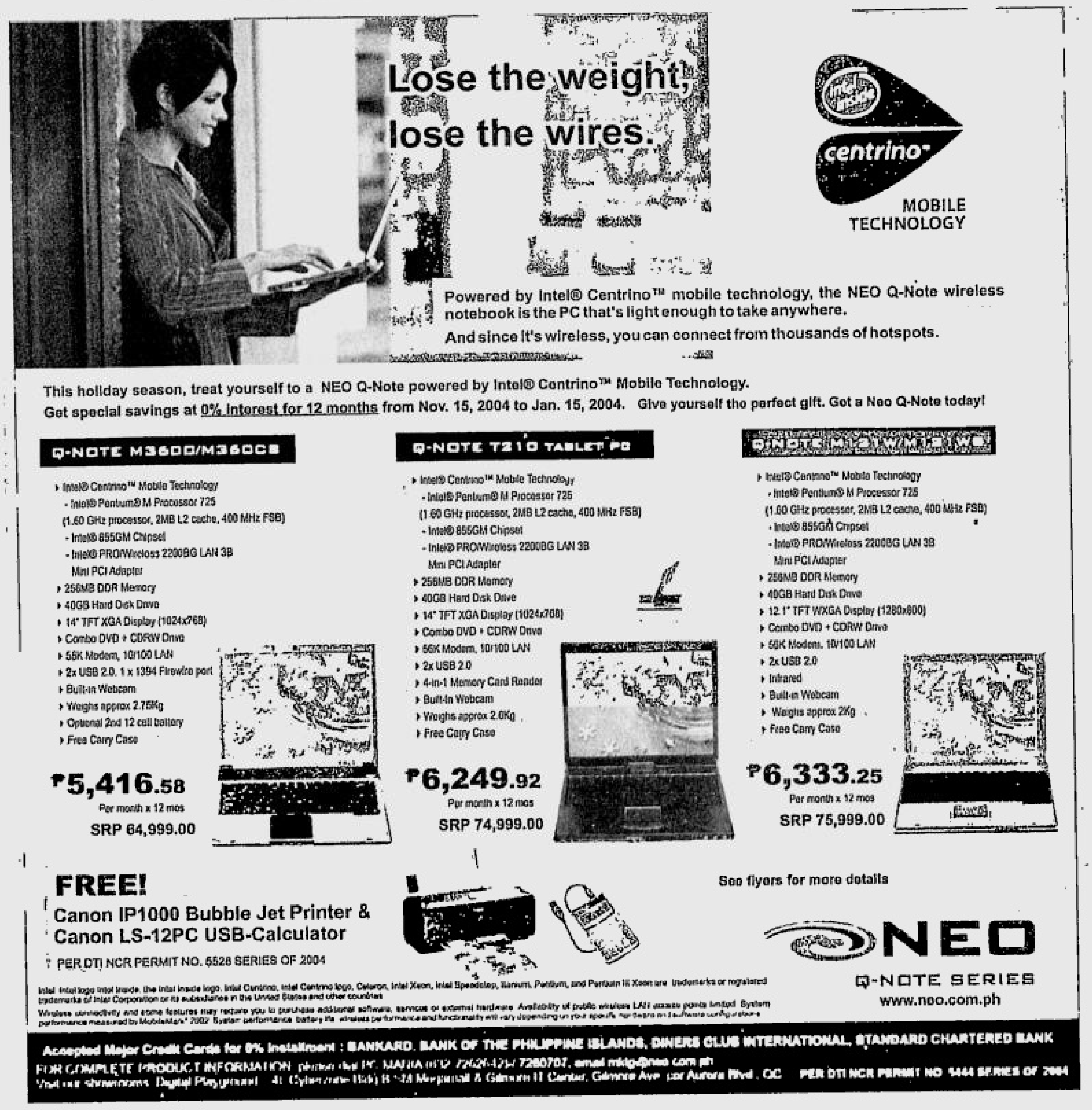
"Our key driver is to create value for our customers. We came in quite late and we are taking advantage of the cheaper costs and passing on the savings to our customers," Gokongwei explained.

A million subscribers may pale in comparison with Smart Communication Inc.'s 17.5 million and Globe Telecom Inc.'s 11.7 million as of end-September. But the Digitel official pointed out that it was growing as fast, if not faster, than the top ranks at the time they started.

The strategy now, he said, was to urge customers to use Sun Cellular as a second phone while tapping new subscribers from the young and low-end market.

With its 24/7 plan, Gokongwei said the company would also encourage its use as a fixed-line alternative.

He said 24/7 is a plan and not a promo so it would be available for a longer period. "The intention is to maintain it because it is a plan. Some more innovations will come out in the future," Gokongwei said.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Meralco seen signing supply deal with Napocor

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy expects Manila Electric Co., the country's biggest power distributor, to sign a transition supply contract (TSC) with the state-owned National Power Corp., a move that is expected to make the state firm's Luzon generation assets more attractive to potential investors.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez explained that this would be in compliance with Section 67 of RA 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), which required Napocor to submit for the approval of the Energy Regulatory Commission a TSC duly negotiated with distribution utilities like Meralco.

This TSC will provide the terms and conditions for electricity supply in preparation for the introduction of the open access transmission service (OATS).

The OATS will allow large power users, or those using at least one megawatt (MW) of electricity, the option to choose their own power supplier. Under the Oats, National Transmission Corp. will grant these power users access to its lines.

As the country's biggest distribution utility, Perez said Meralco played a big role in ensuring the smooth transition to retail competition and open access.

Under retail competition and open access, distribution utilities like Meralco are required to allow any power supplier to use their wires in delivering electricity to end-consumers.

Compensation will be given to these power distributors in the form of an ERC-approved wheeling charge, the term used for the fee a company has to pay for using a distributor's transmission line.

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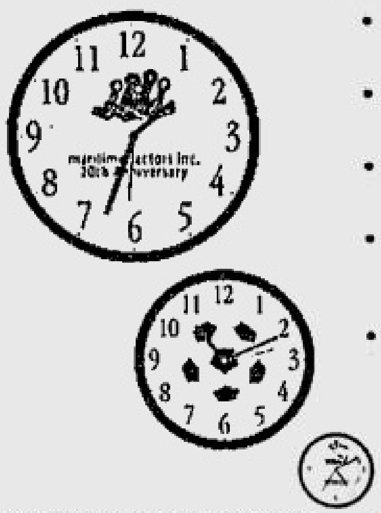

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Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	350,000
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LEHMAN BROTHERS UNIT

Equitable PCI sells P8.3B in idle assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

EQUITABLE PCI Bank has finalized the sale of P8.32 billion worth of non-performing loans to Philippine Investment One Inc., a unit of US investment bank Lehman Brothers Inc.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Equitable PCI said it had closed the sale agreement involving non-performing loans, comprising bulk of the idle assets it wanted to unload using the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework.

Equitable PCI Bank reached an initial agreement with Lehman Brothers on the sale of P10.5 billion in idle assets using the SPV mode.

A separate agreement is being worked out with Lehman for the remaining assets, consisting of real and other properties owned and acquired (ropoas).

Philippine Investment One is a subsidiary of Lehman Brothers South East Asia Pte Ltd.

The SPV Law of 2002 or RA 9182 waives the documentary stamp tax, the capital gains tax and the e-VAT (expanded value-added tax) and reduces the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent on SPV transactions.

Aside from SPV sales, Equitable PCI is also pursuing a strategy of retail public auctions and direct sales of ropoas to reduce its idle assets.

The bank posted a net profit for the nine months to September of P1.2 billion, 22 percent higher than the level a year ago, driven by higher gross interest income and fee-based income.

For year-to-date ending September, net interest income stood at P6.2 billion, 54 percent better than a year ago.

Compared to the previous year, third-quarter net profit jumped by 63 percent to P521 million on the same strong momentum.

As of the third quarter, the bank's assets stood at P303 billion while total deposits stood at P187 billion.

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ICTSI unit obtains $36-M loan

POLAND'S Baltic Container Terminal, a subsidiary of listed port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc., has signed a $36-million loan with foreign banks for its expansion program at a port in Gydnia, Poland.

The loan facility will be provided by Bank Austria Creditanstalt AG (BA-CA) and Bank BPH (BPH).

The loan facility will help fund an expansion program which will boost BCT's container terminal capacity to 600,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) a year from the present 350,000 TEUs.

The $36-million loan will be used to acquire new quayside and yard cranes, upgrade existing cargo handling systems, introduce new mobile cargo handling equipment and install new information technology systems. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Meralco

From page B3

electricity consumers would receive the same benefits that cellular phone users are already enjoying: competition-driven rates and quality of service," Perez said. "With Meralco's cooperation, the Meralco franchise area can become a model of open access for the rest of the country."

The Epira sets certain conditions for the implementation of retail competition and open access. Among these are the sale of 70 percent (in terms of capacity) of Napocor's gencos in Luzon and the Visayas and the operation of the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM).

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has so far sold five Napocor gencos, all mini hydroelectric power plants. These included the 3.5-MW Talomo plant in Davao, the 1.6-MW Agusan plant in Bukidnon, the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur, the 400-kilowatt Cawayan plant in Bicol and the 1.2-MW Loboc plant in Bohol.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 30, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	114,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	23.25	24	23.25	24	1,671,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49.5	51	49.5	51	678,300
China Banking Corp.	580	590	580	590	12,180
Citystate Savings Bank	16.75	17	16.75	17	4,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	49	52	49	51.5	153,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.46	0.42	0.46	6,190,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	29	28	29	533,800
Philippine National Bank	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	500
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	5,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	1,000
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	52,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.25	23	23	44,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	190	190	185	185	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	2555	2555	2555	2555	440
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	41,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1810	1810	1810	1810	60
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.75	18.25	18.75	19,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.84	1.94	1.84	1.9	46,761,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	985	990	985	985	66,170
Ipeople Inc.	2.55	2.95	2.55	2.95	465,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	1,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	150,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.26	2.36	2.26	2.36	63,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.38	2.55	2.36	2.55	20,390,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	200,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1395	1395	1365	1365	113,930
Ivantage Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.79	0.8	1,590,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	90,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	24,800
Manila Electric Co. B	24.75	25.5	24.75	24.75	1,511,400
Petron Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.25	3.3	2,633,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.46	462,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	335,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.8	6.1	5.7	5.8	2,542,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.04	1.18	1.04	1.06	124,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	30,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.14	607,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	3	2.95	2.95	239,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	31	30.5	31	125,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28.5	590,400
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	30,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	30,000
San Miguel Corp. B	74	74	72.5	74	273,700
Universal Robina Corp.	9.5	10	9.5	10	270,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	260,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.004	0.004	0.0038	0.004	26,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	6,850,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	2,144,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.52	1.6	1.52	1.58	625,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.74	0.75	0.69	0.69	41,250,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	6,530,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.75	3.75	3,505,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.65	1,794,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	27.5	27	27.5	270,700
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	800,000
Ionics Inc.	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.48	73,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.4	4.05	3.4	3.75	11,707,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.34	310,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	1,789,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.35	0.39	0.35	0.39	260,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.41	44,520,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.145	0.17	0.145	0.17	480,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.16	0.17	7,050,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	30,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.6	1,960,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.86	1.06	0.86	1.02	7,870,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.65	0.7	0.65	0.68	4,460,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	18	18.5	18	18.5	579,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.1	7.2	7.1	7.2	7,094,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,200,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	11,590,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	5,220,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	17,303,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	450,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.46	371,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.24	0.24	1,850,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.44	393,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	6,101,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	30,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	65,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	106,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.24	0.225	0.23	5,540,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	4,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	68,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.024	200,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp A	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	540,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	3,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	6,400,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	127,000,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	22,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	500,000

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Telegraph and Telephone Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from March 25, 2005 to March 31, 2005.

***

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. and **Philippine Investment One Inc.** executed a non-performing loan sale and purchase agreement, subject to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approval.

***

HENRY Climaco, recently appointed vice president/comptroller/corporate information officer of **Asiatrust Bank**, said he does not have any shares in Asiatrust.

***

ASIATRUST also disclosed that newly elected director Aurora Amaez has 7,501 Asiatrust shares as of Nov. 4.

***

WELLEX Industries Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. at the Top of the Citi, 34/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas St., Makati City.

MA. LOURDES Rausa-Chan, SVP and corporate secretary of **Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.**, disposed of 500 PLDT shares at P1,390 on Nov. 26.

Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

November 30, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.753352	1.000000	56.2310
Japan	Yen	0.007325	0.009723	0.5467
United Kingdom	Pound	1.426322	1.893300	106.4622
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096886	0.128606	7.2316
Switzerland	Franc	0.659390	0.875274	49.2175
Canada	Dollar	0.635151	0.843099	47.4083
Singapore	Dollar	0.460344	0.611060	34.3605
Australia	Dollar	0.591746	0.785484	44.1686
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.998335	2.652590	149.1578
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200894	0.266667	14.9950
Brunei	Dollar	0.458942	0.609199	34.2559
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000111	0.0062
Thailand	Baht	0.019097	0.025349	1.4254
UAE	Dirham	0.205145	0.272309	15.3122
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.327400	74.6410
Argentina	Peso	0.255808	0.339559	19.0937
Brazil	Real	0.274595	0.364498	20.4961
Denmark	Kroner	0.134619	0.178693	10.0481
India	Rupee	0.016872	0.022396	1.2593
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198277	0.263193	14.7996
Mexico	New Peso	0.066932	0.088845	4.9958
New Zealand	Dollar	0.539690	0.716384	40.2830
Norway	Kroner	0.123361	0.163749	9.2078
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012608	0.016736	0.9411
South Africa	Rand	0.130734	0.173536	9.7581
Korea	Won	0.000719	0.000955	0.0537
Sweden	Kroner	0.112303	0.149071	8.3824
Syria	Pound	0.014519	0.019272	1.0837
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023432	0.031104	1.7490
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000393	0.000522	0.0294

Trade pact seen to attract more Japanese to Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) are optimistic that the signing of a free trade agreement (FTA) with Japan will entice more Japanese investors to the freeport zone.

"Subic freeport will (be) like a magnet (to) Japanese investors, and we can assure them that the SBMA will extend utmost cooperation to meet their needs," SBMA Administrator Alfredo Antonio said during a meeting with Japanese investors last Friday.

Ichiro Tsuji, president of the Subic Techno Park (Step), said several Japanese companies, particularly those engaged in the operations of a Japanese retirement village and training for Filipino caregivers, want the implementing rules and guidelines of the proposed FTA to be approved immediately.

Tsuji said Japanese investors saw bigger opportunities with the direct participation of the Japanese government in major infrastructure development projects here such as the Subic-Clark Toll Road and the $215-million Subic Port Modernization project. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation is funding the projects.

"If Subic and Clark will truly become a major transshipment hub in the international market, like Hong Kong and Singapore, this will encourage economic progress in the country," Tsuji said. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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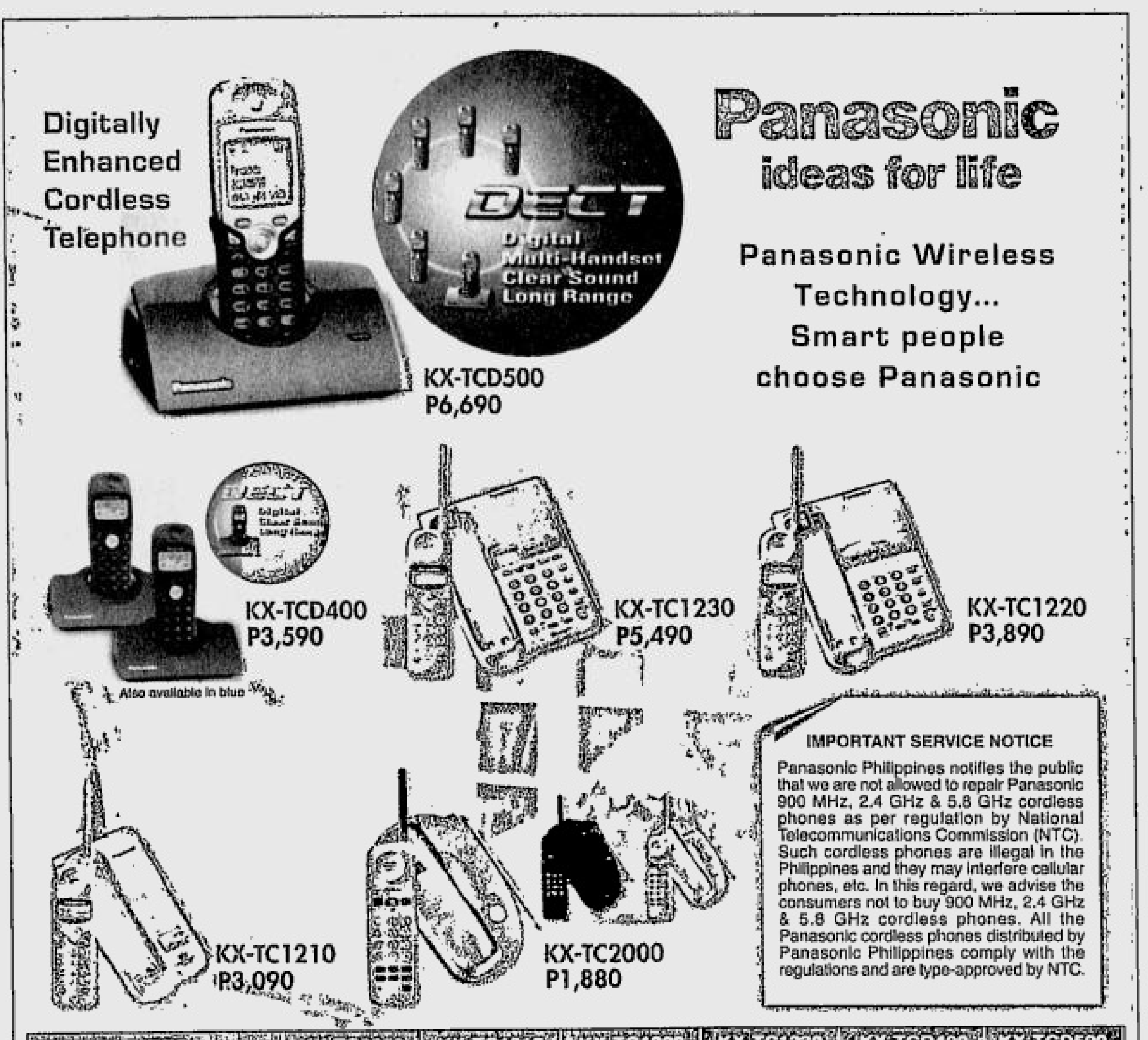
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Caller-ID Memory*		50 stations	50 stations	50 stations		50 stations
Ringer Melody	1 melody	1 melody	1 melody	1 melody	14 melodies	15 melodies
Polyphonic Ring Tones						32 tones
Key Lock					●	●
Navigator Key		●	●	●	●	
Joystick						●
Large LCD with Blue Backlight						●
Lighted Handset Keypad	●	●	●	●		●
Phone Directory	11 stations	30 stations	30 stations	30 stations	20 stations	200 stations
Handset Locator (Paging)	●	●	●	●		●
Intercom w/ 2-way paging			●	●		
Speakerphone			●	●		●
Dual Keypads			●	●		
Digital Answering System				●		
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Multi-Handset Capability (Optional)						up to 6 handsets

*Note: Caller ID Subscription required. Prices (SRP based) and features are subject to change without prior notice.

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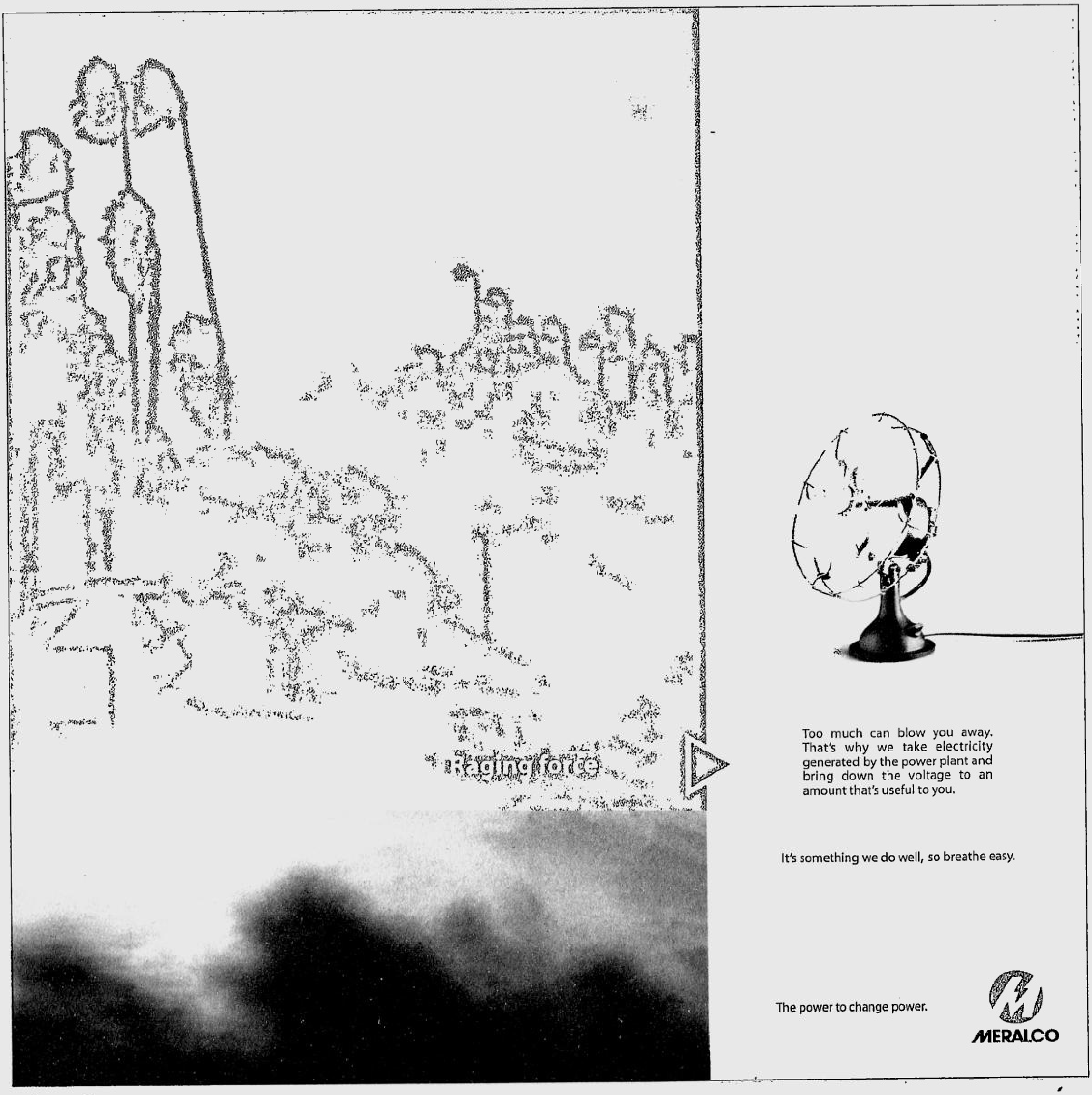

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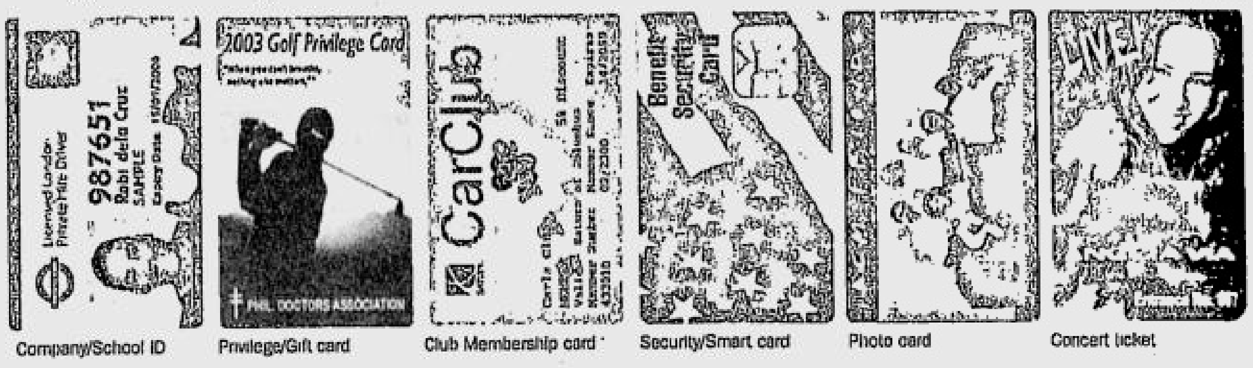
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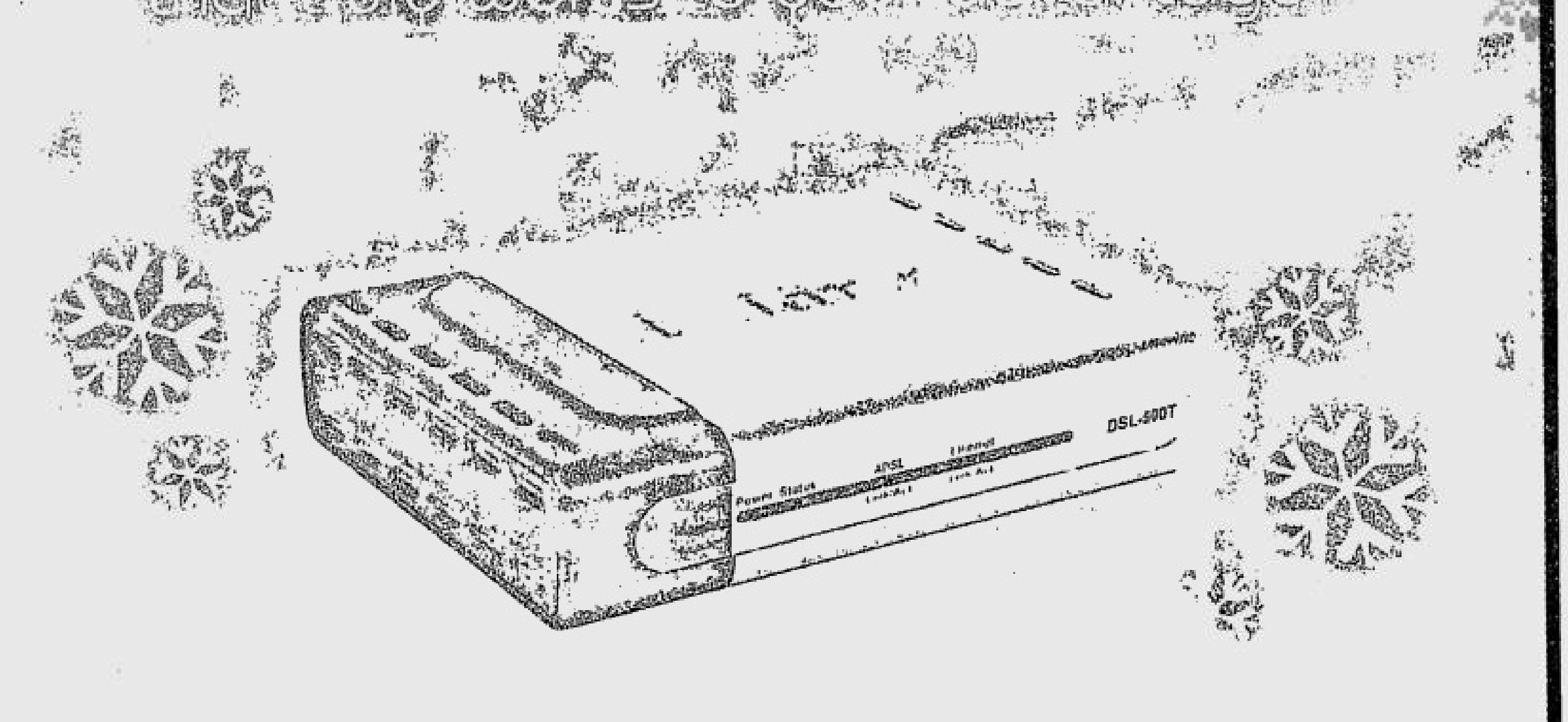
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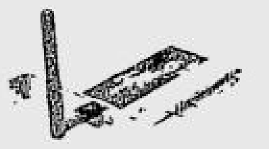
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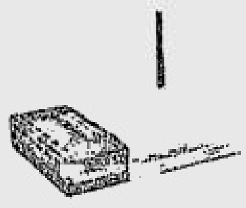
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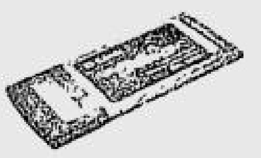
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3047, series of 2004.

5-year bond rises sharply to 12.45%

By Michelle V. Remo

BANKS, wanting to manage their liquidity showed strong appetite for the government's five-year Treasury bond, which yesterday fetched a rate of 12.45 percent.

The new interest rate for the five-year T-bond was 7.5 basis points higher than the 12.375-percent coupon rate recorded in October.

Despite, the increase in the cost of the government's five-year borrowing, Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said the new rate was reasonable because it was comparable with the prevailing rates in the secondary market. He said the new five-year T-bond rate of 12.45 percent was also the best bid in the secondary market.

Bids for the five-year debt paper reached P5.713 billion, much higher than the government's scheduled borrowing of only P4 billion.

Mendiola said the appetite for the five-year government security was due to the high liquidity of the domestic capital market and the fact that the Treasury will only be having two auctions before the Christmas break. Next week, the Treasury will be holding the last auctions for Treasury bills and T-bonds.

But despite the over-subscription to the five-year T-bond, the Treasury's auction committee opted to accept only P3.983 billion worth of bids. Mendiola said the Treasury decided to raise less than what it originally intended to borrow to prevent the five-year debt paper from fetching a rate that is higher than the secondary market rates.

Mendiola also said that the market did not seem to react to the news of a sustained economic growth of 6.3 percent in the third quarter. The 6.3-percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth beat most forecasts and will likely push the full-year GDP to over 6 percent, or higher than the official target of only 4.9 to 5.8 percent.

"There was not quite a movement in the rate so (the market) had not priced in (the GDP growth)," said Mendiola in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Mendiola also said the Treasury would defer the implementation of a circular that was supposed to tighten the rules on participation of government securities eligible dealers (GSEDs). The circular intended to impose a required number of awarded bids to GSEDs to continue their eligibility.

The deputy treasurer said his office was deferring the circular for further study because the newly appointed National Treasurer, Norma Lopez Lasala, seemed to have a different policy from her predecessor, Mina Figueroa, who proposed the implementation of the circular.

Electronics investments surge to $520M

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TOTAL investments in electronics and information technology approved during the first 10 months reached $502 million or 118 percent higher than the amount reached for the whole of 2003, an industry group yesterday reported.

The Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc. said the sectors it represented accounted for $368 million or 73 percent of the investments committed from January to October.

Projects lined up in the semiconductor and electronics sector came from 43 companies that have expanded their operations in the country, Seipi said.

Aside from that, 28 new electronics companies are new economic zone locators who have put up manufacturing plants in the Philippines.

The group added that the new investments were expected to create some 195,000 jobs, of which about 24,300 are direct hires.

At the same time, investments approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the Board of Investments amounted to a total of $133 million.

These projects are from 66 companies and are expected to create some 25,000 new jobs.

Ernie Santiago, Seipi executive director, said that the increase in investment commitments was due to a strong start for 2004, favorable conditions in the economy of the United States, a rise in the operating levels of facilities compared to their capacities, and a growing confidence among multinational and local companies doing business in the Philippines.

Santiago said the investment performance for the industry has been experiencing a steady momentum and could be further attributed to President Macapagal-Arroyo's new mandate following the election last May.

The semiconductor and electronics industry projects a 10-percent export growth for 2004.

Earlier, Seipi officials said the industry would grow this year by at least P24 billion or about 10 percent from last year's P230 billion amid a surge in the global market.

Industry data show that domestic investments in the sector could grow as high as 15 percent.

Sickness drove man to organic farming, pili oil

By Emir Emano Gamis
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

IN SORSOGON, the pili tree is known as the "majestic tree" due to its many uses.

More than just a source of nuts made into food and candies that have become famous souvenir items from the province, it is also a source of raw materials to produce plaster and ointment in pharmacy, adhesives, printing inks and even paints and varnishes.

To emphasize the importance of pili to the Sorsoganons, in particular, and the Bicolanos, in general, a Pili Festival is even held in Sorsogon City every June—with this year's celebration highlighted by a pili nut-cracking activity participated by thousands of Sorsoganons and held along the 25-kilometer city stretch.

But it took a native of Zambales to produce organic pili oil, which is said to have health benefits.

Health benefits

Fernando "Ding" Simon, 55, owner of YamanKo Food Enterprises (YamanKo) in Quezon City, a producer of organic pili oil with mixed herbs and Nectalife—a mixture of nectar and fruits, is the first to say that he was healed of his diabetes by pili oil and he wants to share its benefits with others.

Careless life

Producing pili oil was far from his mind in the early 1980s when he was busy running three clubs in Malate.

Simon, a graduate of accounting from the Far Eastern University, says he used to live a carefree life—hooked on drinking and smoking.

His lifestyle caught up with him in 1989 when he was diagnosed with diabetes.

Simon was unable to walk and his kidney malfunctioned.

Worse, he was told that diabetes was not covered by his health insurance.

He had to shell out about P18,000—a considerable amount at that time—during his confinement in a hospital in Manila.

"I told myself I would recover. I did not eat, I did not get an injection. But I was scanned and all. I was told my sugar level was up, causing abnormality to my body functions," he tells the INQUIRER.

Turning point

The bout with sickness proved to be the turning point for Simon, who closed the clubs and an appliance store he owned and went home to his hometown in Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

"I realized it was useless to work so hard and ignore your health because when you get sick, all your money will be spent on medication," he recalls.

Though "very sick," he researched on plants and organic gardening and made a natural supplement diet for himself.

"I thought of nectar because it's a very good source of sugar. I even targeted coconut as a source of fats. But in my research, I discovered pili, which has iodine that is not present in the coconut. When you combine the two, it's excellent," he says.

Soon, he was testing his concoction and got good results from feeding pili to tilapia and sugpo in his fishpond. He even tried watering his plants with pili oil and nectar, with surprising results.

"They grew so fast," he said.

Encouraged by the results, he started taking both the nectar and pili oil himself.

Simon says that in just six months, his health returned to normal. Gone were the days when he had no appetite, slept most of the time and had blurred vision.

"When natural oil like pili oil—which has iodine, sulfur, phosphorous and potassium —is combined with glucose and the protein we eat, we get the nutrients the body needs," Simon claims.

Back to Manila

With most of his research completed and having fully recovered, he went back to Manila and worked as branch manager of a car aircon company in Quezon Avenue in 1995. There he met a Japanese customer who convinced him to resign and concentrate on his product, which he did not sell during those times.

The Japanese customer convinced him to produce the product since he also took pili oil to help him manage his heart ailment.

"He even lent me some money that he said he was able to save because of his recovery from his heart ailment," Simon says.

He admits the Japanese gave him more than $100,000.

"I used all of it to buy pili (kernel) because I was afraid I might spend it on some other things. I found it hard at first, because it was really difficult to do a sales pitch," he adds.

He spent the money he saved from his job on books and research.

Simon left his work in 1997 and went right into business. He started out by giving his products to those who were sick, just to convince them of the oil's benefits.

"I really did my research. I spent my time on it. That's why I have a library in the house and I have so many books," he reveals.

He registered the YamanKo with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau Internal Revenue in May this year.

Now, Simon has mixed pili oil with mixed herbs extracted from rosemary, garlic, cloves and oregano.

No approved claims

He claims that the mixture, aside from improving the physical and external health, aids in various illnesses like opacity and eye cataract, gangrene, nephritis, rheumatic fever, diabetes mellitus and congenital heart diseases, to name some.

But he concedes that there is no government agency to directly verify and approve these claims, which are shared by about a hundred persons who have benefited from his products.

When asked if there are dissatisfied customers, Simon says there are a few—those who did not change their lifestyle.

Simon is a member of the Organic Producers Trade Association (Opta) after an organic producer, who was healed of osteoporosis and a failing eyesight through pili oil and Nectalife, invited him to join Agrilink in World Trade in Pasay City.

Interests

"At first, the Opta president, Mrs. (Rosalina Quintos) Tan was not convinced, but I asked her to try my product. When her cholesterol level returned to normal, she asked me to bring my products," Simon recalls.

While Simon bemoans the lack of support from the government, he reveals that an Arab national convinced him to work in his country, and both the Japan International Cooperating Agency (Jica) and a pharmaceutical company in Europe have expressed interest in his products and offered him proposals.

"There are also some buyers who bring boxes of pili oil and Nectalife abroad," he says.

Simon, however, says he is not keen on accepting any of the proposals, and instead wants to share his products first with Filipinos.

Secrets

He also keeps secrets of his trade to keep competition and adulterators at bay.

His products, the pili oil and Nectalife, are available in some health and organic stores in Metro Manila.

Simon is now looking for possible distributors in the province.

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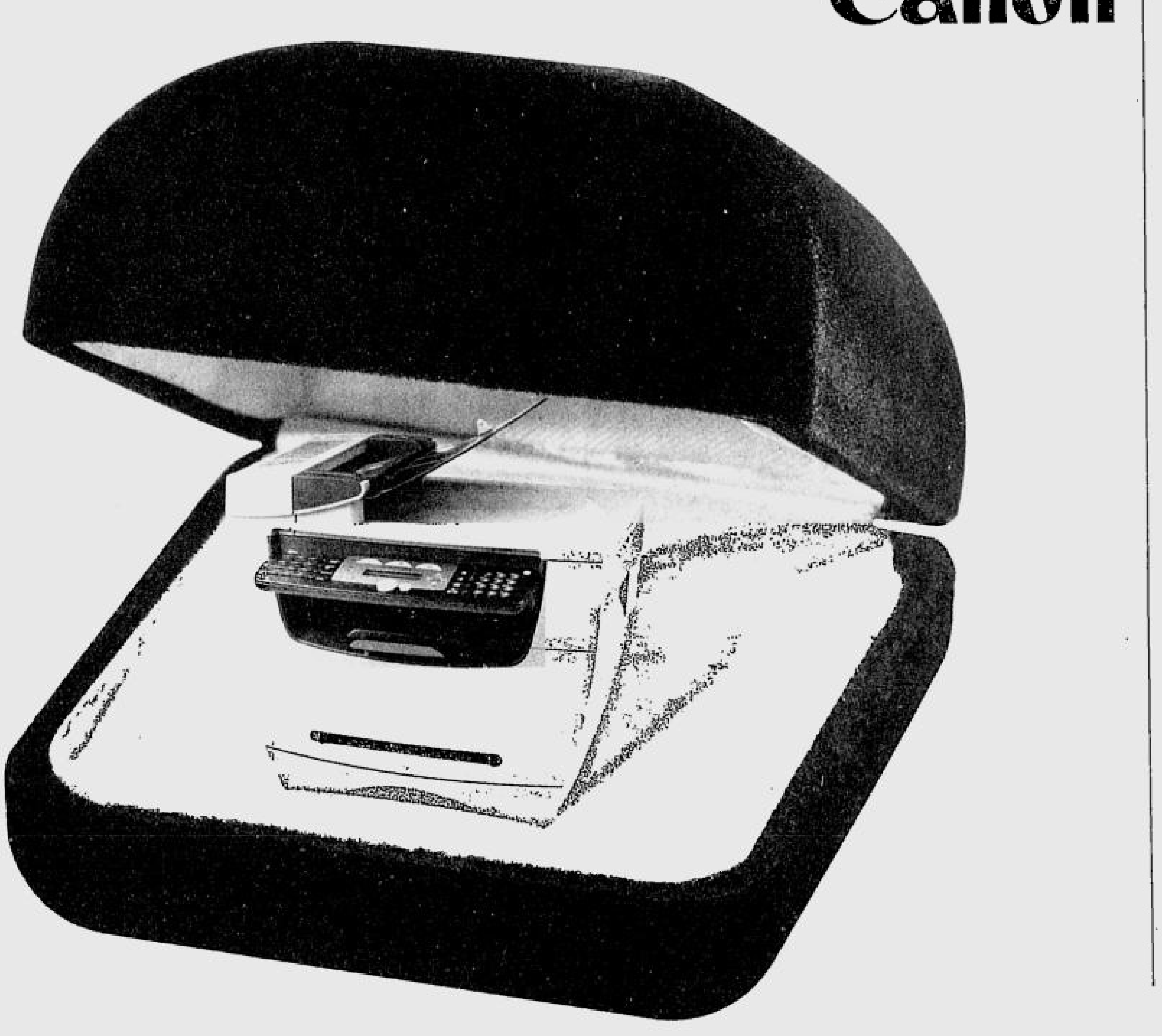

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Banks get year-long grace period to adopt new accounting system

By Elizabeth Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) is giving banks, mutual funds and pre-need firms until the end of 2005 to comply with the new accounting standards.

These standards include International Accounting Standards 39 on financial instruments which the various finance institutions wanted to defer.

The IAS, adopted in 2000, prescribe guidelines on the preparation of financial statements across different sectors, among others.

"The alternative of deferring IAS 39 was discussed, but a lot of other (firms) may be affected," an SEC official said.

"Regulatory reporting may differ from GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) in 2005 if the regulators give in to the requests (of further deferment)," the official added.

The Bankers Association of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of commercial banks in the country, earlier asked the SEC for a postponement last September.

The BAP said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has to finalize its own guidelines with respect to customizing the guidelines for the local banking industry.

Most banks will also have to overhaul their current accounting, measurement or valuation and reporting systems in order to meet requirements of the new standards.

The BSP earlier said the greatest impact of the standards would be on loan provisioning of financial institutions.

The current loan provisioning practice of setting up allowance for possible losses is based on a percentage of outstanding balance.

The IAS-prescribed system, on the other hand, is based on estimated expected cash flows using interest rates on the loan.

DOF: Balanced budget before '09 'unrealistic'

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is not inclined to change its target of wiping out the national government's budget deficit by 2009, saying proposals to hasten the consolidation of the budget was unrealistic because of the still relatively weak revenue collection.

The DOF said balancing the budget earlier than 2009 would be too ambitious and would mean drastic cuts in expenditures, which are already currently tight.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said moving the goal to an earlier date could only be achieved if Congress would approve all the proposed revenue-raising measures being pushed by the Arroyo administration. The measures, which include hike in several taxes and cut in fiscal incentives, are expected to yield P80 billion in additional revenue a year.

The budget deficit is expected to stand at or below P197.8 billion this year. For the first 10 months of the year, the deficit hit P147.726 billion. This was a result of the P576.971 billion worth of revenue collections and P724.697 billion in government expenditures.

Earlier, Rep. Herminio Teves, vice chair of the House committee on ways and means, said the government should work double time to achieve earlier the goal of a balanced budget because the country's image before the international capital market is at stake.

"Time is a luxury we do not have," Teves said in a paid advertisement in newspapers yesterday. "A business-as-usual attitude in managing our crippling debt is simply irresponsible."

Teves said the budget deficit could be wiped out earlier than 2009 if the government would adopt other revenue-raising measures, which do not necessarily require increase in taxes and therefore would not elicit a backlash from taxpayers.

The legislator recommended measures like lifting the confidentiality of tax payments to prevent corruption and easy detection of tax delinquency, in-depth studies on the potential revenue from each tax type, and tie-up between the Bureau of Internal Revenue and other government agencies and local government units to better detect tax delinquency.

Teves also suggested that the government look into the tax remittance of the water transport, air transport and amusement sectors and tighten their reportorial requirements.

For her part, Amatong said the proposals of Teves were welcome, but that BIR had started to implement some of the measures.

219 stations now offer discount on diesel

TO EASE the cost burdens of the public transport sector, 219 various fuel stations are now offering discount on diesel.

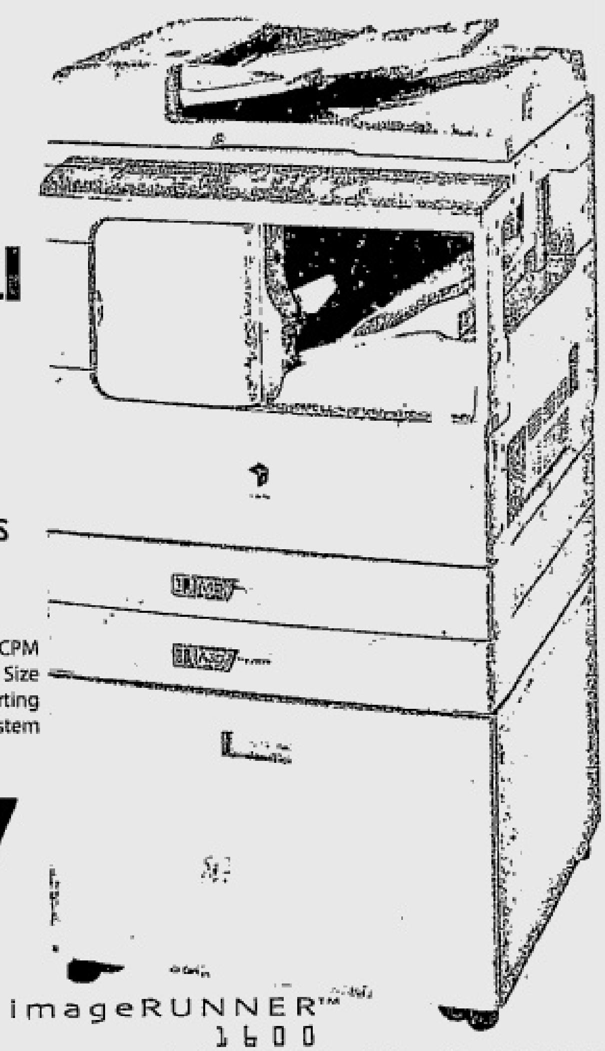
From only 154 stations last week, the number of service stations providing diesel price markdowns had increased to 219, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said. All 219 stations are selling diesel at 50 centavos lower per liter.

"And the number is growing as oil companies are afraid to lose their market due to intense competition," he said in a statement yesterday.

Perez said the government, particularly the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, was still holding dialogues with various public transport groups to find long-term solutions to their problems, specifically high operating costs.

"The government is working hard to look for measures to help our public transport groups," he said. "But at the same time we ask for their cooperation and (hope they will) cease from resorting to transport strikes that only result in major inconveniences to the riding public and huge economic losses."

Last week, industry leader Petron Corp. announced that 74 of its stations nationwide are now offering discount on diesel. *Abigail L. Ho*



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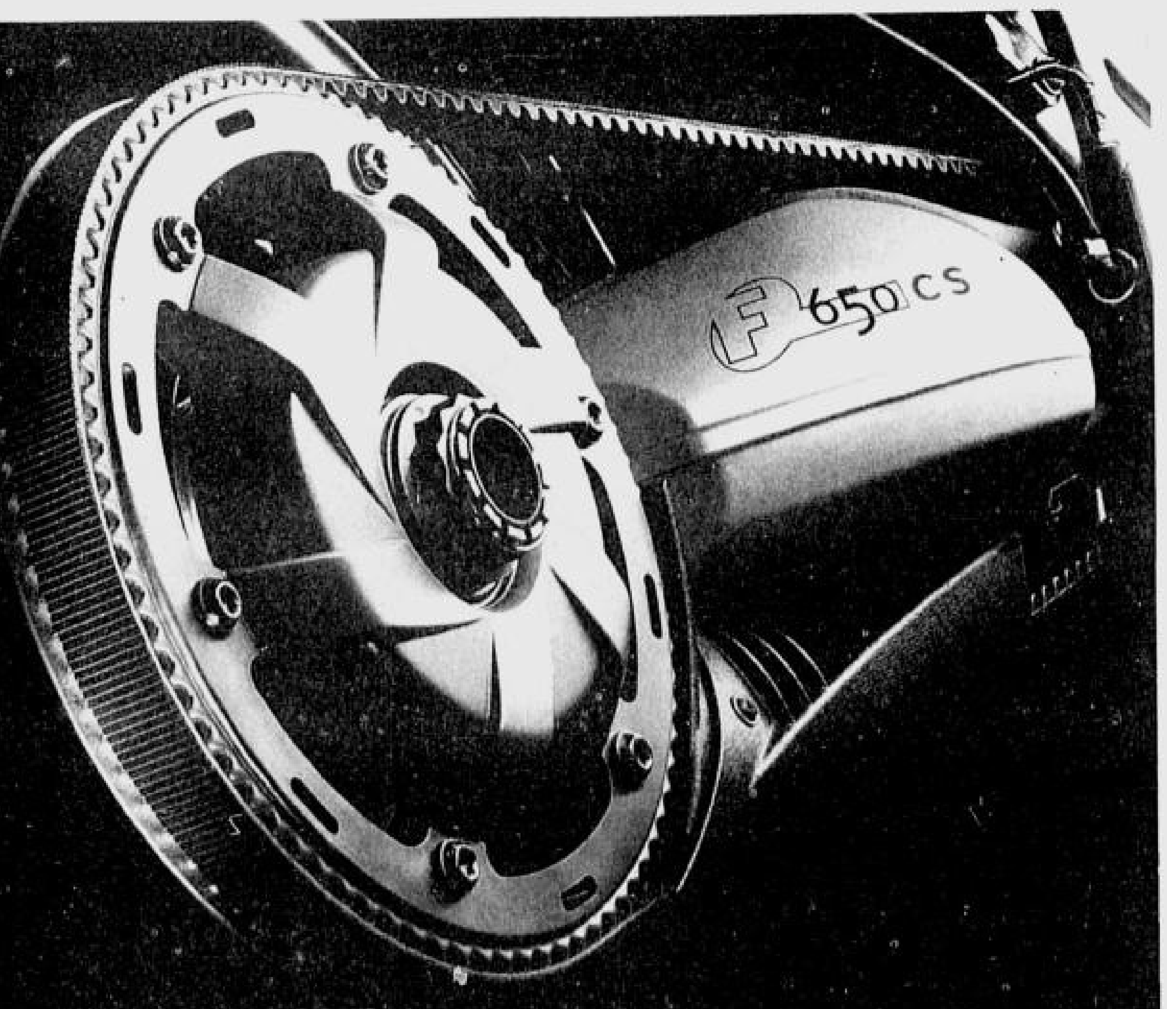

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RP agrees to swap agri tech with US, 3 others

By Christine A. Gaylican

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap and his counterparts from Iran, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States yesterday have agreed in principle to set up an agriculture technology exchange to ensure food security and political stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

The agriculture heads of the five countries reached the agreement during a meeting with other Asia-Pacific leaders attending the International Rice Forum held at the Philippine Trade and Training Center.

The Philippines hopes that by 2007, more than one million hectares would be allotted to hybrid rice.

The officials expect a yield of six million metric tons of unmilled rice at an estimated seed budget of P1.2 billion.

For this crop year, the DA is looking at 200,500 hectares of hybrid riceland, Yap said. The riceland will be expanded to 250,000 hectares in the May-October season next year, and 350,000 hectares by April 2006.

The Philippines is the fourth country—after China, India and Vietnam—to engage in hybrid rice production.

Yap told the forum delegates that Philippine agriculture grew by 6.8 percent in the first three quarters of this year.

He said the farmers' gross earnings reached P588 billion buoyed by the 7.2 percent growth in the crops sector. Crops made up almost half of the total agriculture output for the period.

Palay production rose by 14 percent, while corn output jumped 22.5 percent, Yap said.

Yap also urged the continuous funding of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Rice Program through regular appropriations and counterparting schemes with local government units.

Yap revealed how some local government units came up with strategies to encourage farmers to plant hybrid and certified rice. He cited how officials in Nueva Ecija provided cash prizes to farmers with the highest harvests.

In Bohol, he said, officials facilitated loans to seed producers. In Mindoro Occidental, officials have subsidized part of the cost of hybrid rice seeds given to farmers, Yap added.

Pre-need firms see 21% growth in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

OFFICIALS of the pre-need industry are expecting sales to grow by more than 21 percent in 2005, driven by higher investment income from higher interest rates and by tapping new markets in the provinces.

Leaders of the Philippine Federation of Pre-need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI) yesterday said that higher interest rates next year will boost investment income, which account for 20 to 30 percent of the total income.

Officials said that a portion of the pre-need investments are placed in government securities. But they said the bulk of the growth would still come from sales.

"We are more optimistic about 2005," said Jesus Hofileña, president of Philam Plans, a subsidiary of the American International Group. "The challenges next year (lie) in marketing and identifying areas of opportunity."

Hofileña said the growth achieved this year has been due to price increases. He also cited how the industry was coming from a lower base last year.

Miguel Vazquez, PFPPCI president and head of Permanent Plans Inc., said costs for most pre-need firms were slashed by spreading commission distributions over a certain period instead of giving them all at once.

In a report by Actuarial Advisers Inc. using data from the Securities and Exchange Commission, pre-need sales grew 21 percent to P28.7 billion in the first nine months of the year.

Vazquez said that the federation is preparing to propose incentives to legislators to encourage pre-need companies to consolidate.

At present, pre-need officials have no concrete proposals, he said. But they are considering to use as a model the incentives given to banks.

This may, on a broad stroke, include possible expansion of licenses or certain leeways.

To date there are about more than 30 pre-need firms operating in the country.

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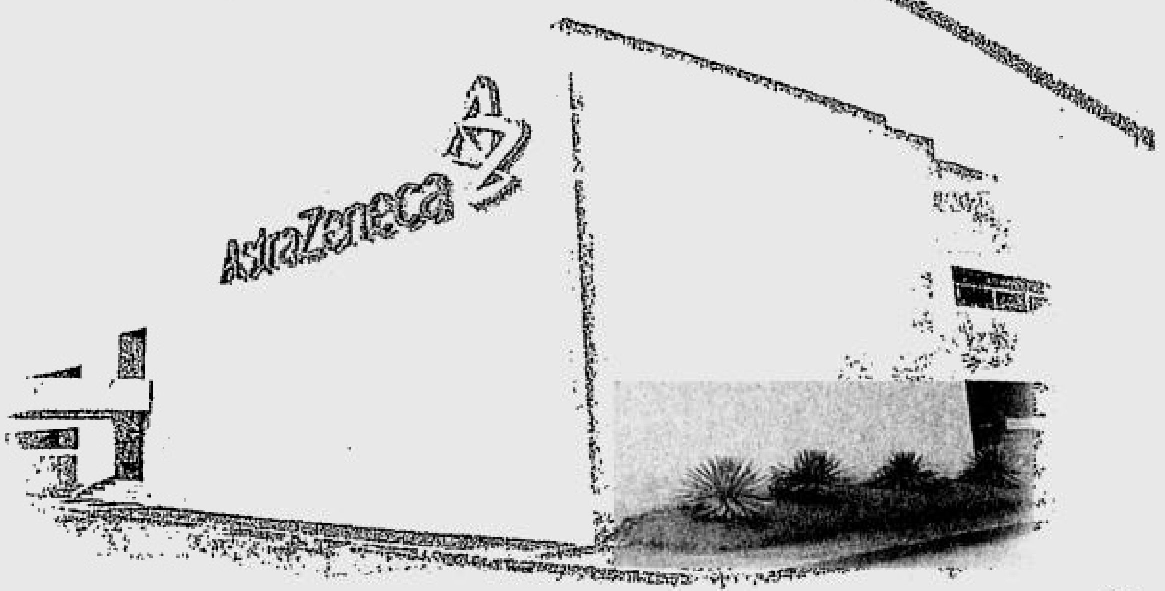

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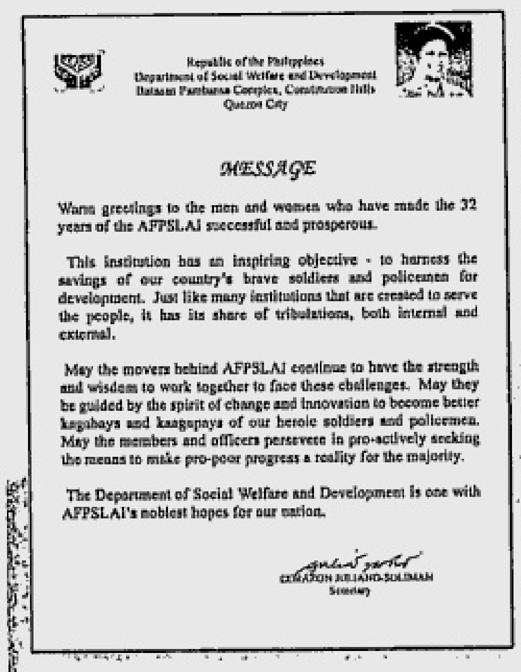

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MESSAGE

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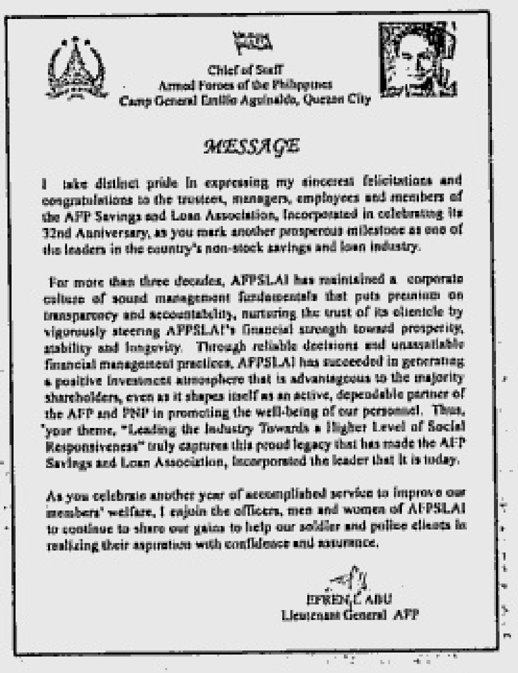
The Department of Social Welfare and Development is one with AFPSLAI's noblest hopes for our nation.

CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary



Chief of Staff
Armed Forces of the Philippines
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

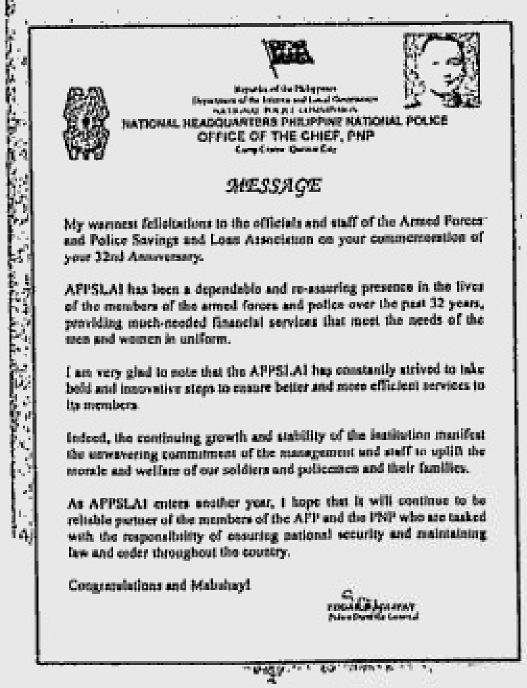
MESSAGE

I take distinct pride in expressing my sincerest felicitations and congratulations to the trustees, managers, employees and members of the AFP Savings and Loan Association, Incorporated in celebrating its 32nd Anniversary, as you mark another prosperous milestone as one of the leaders in the country's non-stock savings and loan industry.

For more than three decades, AFPSLAI has maintained a corporate culture of sound management fundamentals that puts premium on transparency and accountability, nurturing the trust of its clientele by vigorously steering AFPSLAI's financial strength toward prosperity, stability and longevity. Through reliable decisions and unassailable financial management practices, AFPSLAI has succeeded in generating a positive investment atmosphere that is advantageous to the majority shareholders, even as it shapes itself as an active, dependable partner of the AFP and PNP in promoting the well-being of our personnel. Thus, your theme, "Leading the Industry Towards a Higher Level of Social Responsiveness" truly captures this proud legacy that has made the AFP Savings and Loan Association, Incorporated the leader that it is today.

As you celebrate another year of accomplished service to improve our members' welfare, I enjoin the officers, men and women of AFPSLAI to continue to share our gains to help our soldier and police clients in realizing their aspiration with confidence and assurance.

EFREN L ABU
Lieutenant General AFP



Republic of the Philippines
Department of the Interior and Local Government
NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF, PNP
Camp Crame, Quezon City

MESSAGE

My warmest felicitations to the officials and staff of the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association on your commemoration of your 32nd Anniversary.

AFPSLAI has been a dependable and re-assuring presence in the lives of the members of the armed forces and police over the past 32 years, providing much-needed financial services that meet the needs of the men and women in uniform.

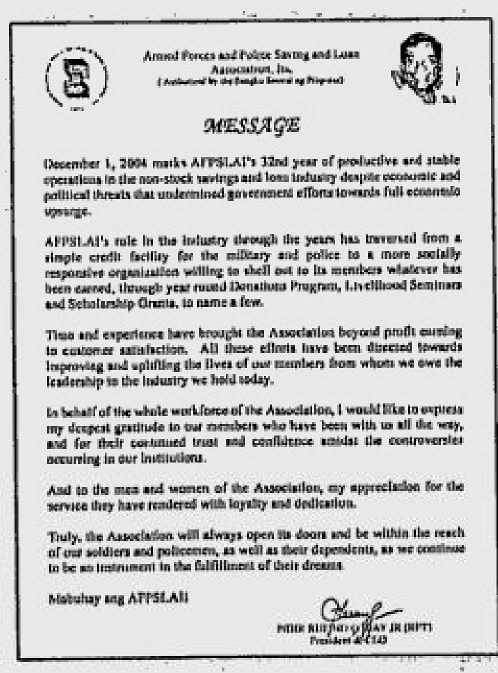
I am very glad to note that the AFPSLAI has constantly strived to take bold and innovative steps to ensure better and more efficient services to its members.

Indeed, the continuing growth and stability of the institution manifest the unwavering commitment of the management and staff to uplift the morale and welfare of our soldiers and policemen and their families.

As AFPSLAI enters another year, I hope that it will continue to be reliable partner of the members of the AFP and the PNP who are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring national security and maintaining law and order throughout the country.

Congratulations and Mabuhay!

EDGAR B AGLIPAY
Police Director General



Armed Forces and Police Saving and Loan Association, Inc.
(Authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)

MESSAGE

December 1, 2004 marks AFPSLAI's 32nd year of productive and stable operations in the non-stock savings and loan industry despite economic and political threats that undermined government efforts towards full economic upsurge.

AFPSLAI's role in the industry through the years has traversed from a simple credit facility for the military and police to a more socially responsive organization willing to shell out to its members whatever has been earned, through year round Donations Program, Livelihood Seminars and Scholarship Grants, to name a few.

Time and experience have brought the Association beyond profit earning to customer satisfaction. All these efforts have been directed towards improving and uplifting the lives of our members from whom we owe the leadership in the industry we hold today.

In behalf of the whole workforce of the Association, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our members who have been with us all the way, and for their continued trust and confidence amidst the controversies occurring in our institutions.

And to the men and women of the Association, my appreciation for the service they have rendered with loyalty and dedication.

Truly, the Association will always open its doors and be within the reach of our soldiers and policemen, as well as their dependents, as we continue to be an instrument in the fulfillment of their dreams.

Mabuhay ang AFPSLAI!

[illegible] JR (RET)
President & CEO

AFPSLAI @ 32:

Leading The Industry Towards A Higher Level of Social Responsiveness

32ND ANNIVERSARY

December 1, 2004
Bulwagang Hen Arturo T Enrile
(AFP Theater and Multi-Purpose Hall)
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

Corporate Milestones

Financial and Operational Highlights

- Total assets as of end-September 2004 aggregated to P34.7 B, a growth of P2 B or 6% from the year-end December 2003 figure of P32.7 B.
- Total loans released as of end September 2004 reached P17.66 B, benefiting 129,142 borrowers.
- As of end-September 2004, total membership stood at 417,401 or a net addition of 14,461 within the year. Membership base is comprised mainly of the AFP, PNP, BJMP, BFP, Retired/Civilian employees and Associate members.

Major Undertaking and Significant Accomplishments

- Enhancement of existing products and services:
  - Reduction of salary loan rates by as much as 2% per annum as well as the interest rates for emergency, commercial, and back-to-back loans last February 2004;
  - Gradual reduction of Capital Contribution Account (CCA) limit from P7M to P5M and the implementation of the P200T ceiling on quarterly deposits;
  - Adoption of a new schedule of dividend declaration/payout and placements for CCA to comply with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' directive to pay dividend based on actual income earned;
  - Increased the maximum loanable amount of pension to 95% of the monthly pension.
- Initiated the completion and full implementation of the Integrated Mission Critical Systems (IMCS), which would integrate AFPSLAI's computerized sub-systems to facilitate member's transactions thru faster exchange of information from head office to the branch offices.
- Initiated the completion of the online set-up for the 20 branch offices of AFPSLAI in pursuit of AFPSLAI's vision for a "one-stop-shop".
- Initiated improvements on facilities and office spaces:
  - Completion/inauguration of the following:
    Tagbilaran, Bohol Extension Office – April 17, 2004
    Tanay Extension Office – October 23, 2004
    Pili, Camarines Sur Extension Office – November 13, 2004
    Ipil, Zamboanga Extension Office
  - Renovation/expansion of Clark, Isabela, Pagadian, Cebu, Occidental Mindoro, and Baguio
  - Upgrade of Occidental Mindoro Extension Office (capable of pre-processing of membership and loan applications)
- The livelihood/entrepreneur training for members and their dependents through the AFPSLAI Livelihood Program under the area of responsibility of 18 branch offices nationwide.
- Major donations to various AFP and PNP units:
  - 28 ambulances for major hospital units of the AFP and PNP nationwide
  - Seven brand new microcomputer sets for PNP and Philippine Army
- Sponsorship of collegiate education of 93 dependents of members through the AFPSLAI Scholarship Program.
- Outreach Program benefiting station hospitals and dispensaries under the area of responsibility of 18 branch offices all over the country.

Celebration Highlights

Search for Successful Member-Entrepreneurs of the Year 2004

PO3 Raul G Noval
1st Prize

MSGT Gil B Veras
2nd Prize

SPO1 Rolando R Gomez
3rd Prize

SPO2 Gerry E Monsalud
Most Promising

Outreach Program

Surex offers convenient location for Hong Kong OFWs

IN LINE with its pursuit of being the number one courier service provider to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), Sure Express Worldwide (Surex) recently marked the formal opening of an outlet in Central Hong Kong.

The new branch facilitates the entry of super convenient, reliable and inexpensive courier service options to the thriving Filipino community and other customers in regions of Hong Kong. "It is part of our efforts to sustain our accelerating momentum," Surex president Henry Tsai said.

As the Philippines' first international delivery center, Surex serves as a clear-cut example of a Philippine enterprise that has established a firm foothold in its home country and now faces concrete challenges as it develops into a successful international business. The new outlet establishes a direct connection between cost-effective, convenient courier services in Hong Kong and cost-effective, convenient courier services in the Philippines.

It will be noted that Hong Kong relies on innovation and ingenuity to remain a world-class center serving the needs of small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs (SMEs) in terms of transport, cargo handling and logistics. Surex is banking on its efficient, high-quality service to tap into the courier and logistical needs of a thriving OFW population as well as locals and merchants in the area. Cutting-edge technology and dispatch, reliability and competence of Surex are expected to work to their full advantage in meeting the challenges ahead in the dynamic marketplace. As the logistics service retailer and franchising arm of Skynet International Express and exclusive business partner in the Asia-Pacific of the United States Postal Service (USPS), Surex clearly remains driven in its commitment to achieving its growth targets for the next few years.

Tsai disclosed that Surex intends to finish the Asian network and move on as well to the seven gateways to the United States-Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Miami, Memphis and Hawaii-in the next five years.

Surex international delivery centers offer not just reliable courier services but also support business services ranging from retailing of airplane or cruise tickets, money transfer, computer usage, scanning and Internet services, photocopying, lamination and bookbinding. For business opportunity inquiries and news updates, log on to www.sure-express.com.

FEDEX CEBU, MANILA WIN SAFETY AWARDS

The Manila and Cebu facilities of FedEx Express in the Philippines recently won the FedEx Asia Pacific (Apac) Safety Performance Award for 2004. The award demonstrates FedEx Manila and Cebu operations' achievement of excellence in overall safety performance. Manila and Cebu won with their outstanding safety record for the fiscal year (ending May 31) with zero accidents, injuries, aircraft or vehicle damage. The safety continuous improvement teams of the Manila office were likewise given recognition for performing continuous safety procedures and activities. FedEx Express country manager for the Philippines Samuel S. David (left) explained that FedEx 'thinks, talks, and works with safety as a primary concern.' The FedEx Apac Safety Performance Award for 2004 was given to Alex Brandes, FedEx Manila operations manager (middle) and Domingo Montenegro, FedEx Cebu operations manager.

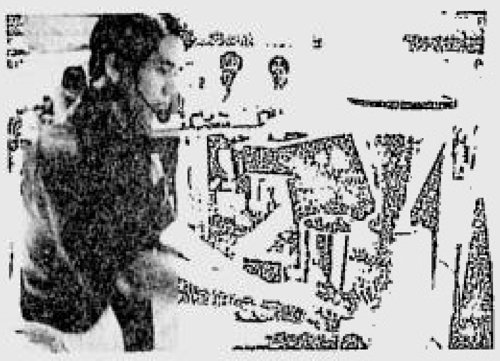
The Coffee Beanery wins at 2nd Barista Cup

AN ESPRESSO blended with *langka, buko pandan* and served in a glass designed with native materials such as bamboo and rattan and topped with a miniature Philippine flag won for The Coffee Beanery and barista Wency Dalanon the grand prize in the 2nd Philippine Barista Cup, an event coinciding with The 2nd Coffee, Tea and Specialty Beverage Trade Show held recently at SM Megamall.

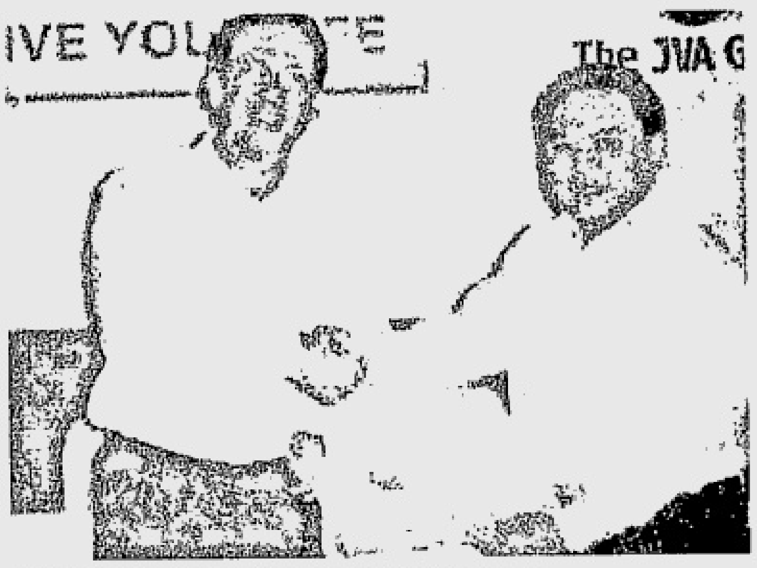
Wency's feat, which is remarkable as he was also the champion in last year's 1st Philippine Barista Cup, earned him a place to represent the country in the World Barista Competition to be held in Singapore this yearend. He also got an award for "Best Espresso Making."

The Coffee Beanery, known as a pioneer of perfecting coffeemaking in the local scene, takes pride in raising the quality of its baristas through intensive training. For The Coffee Beanery, coffeemaking is not just a skill, it is both a science and an art.

Visit The Coffee Beanery at all Cravings outlets and at the 5th level of Shangri-la Plaza mall, 2nd floor SM City Marilao, Quezon Avenue, Barangay Holy Spirit in Commonwealth, Metrowalk Ortigas and Mandaue, Cebu.



WENCY Dalanon



COCOLIFE, TRISTAR GROUP INK PACT

Cocolife and the TriStar Group of Banana Companies recently signed a memorandum of agreement that will enable the employees of TriStar to enjoy life insurance and retirement benefits under the Group Permanent program of Cocolife. The TriStar Group is one of the country's leading banana exporters. A member of the Davao-based Jesus V. Ayala (JVA) Group of Companies and an ISO certified organization, the TriStar Group is composed of six companies: Mandayaw Agricultural Crops Corp, ECE Farming Corp, NEA Farming Corp, Davao Trade Exponents Inc, TriStar Logistics Corp, and Tagluno Development Corp. The signing was held at Marco Polo Hotel, Davao City Sep. 17. Shown is Cocolife president lawyer Alfredo Tumacder Jr and TriStar president and CEO William Leh.

Paulo, a wild cat?

THIS WILD cat is not wild at all. Always smiling, Paulo can be very charming and affectionate, much like your pet cat at home who likes being stroked and is very playful. Paulo is six years old and is diagnosed as PDD-NOS, which is one of the Autistic Spectrum Disorders. He plays the wild cat in "Snow White: a Modern Retelling of a Classic Tale", together with younger brother, Mark.

The play is very unique in that it brings together the special children and the youth of the community to perform together in one stage. The stage play will be a modern version of "Snow White". The cast will all be dressed in animé costumes and the set is straight out of an animé scene. It is revolutionary because it is the special children, children with Down's Syndrome and Autism, who will spice up every scene with their participation. The play cemented the bond between the special children and the other members of the community.

Attending the acting workshops and being in the play has tapped Paulo's imagination and has helped him specially now that his verbal skills are just emerging. Pau-pau enjoys playing with the entire cast and literally trails around "mother cat" Andro, who is also the play's assistant director. Mommy Olivet believes that Snow White has definitely helped Paulo better cope with his developmental concerns.

On Dec 11, the Our Lady of Beautiful Love Parish in Merville will finally see the fruition of the many months of hard work and endless rehearsals. Together with the Parish Youth Ministry, the cast will feature four special persons who will play some of the main characters of the quasi-musicale. This project has been a precious venue in promoting respect and caring for the differently-abled. It has given the persons/children with disability a special and unique gift of play and performance that helped them gain confidence and made them feel special to the community.

For sponsorships, tickets and reservations, call Honey Lee at 0919-3871182 or Marite at 0920-9130642 or Neda at the OLBL parish office 824-2688. Sponsorships of tickets for the benefit of children in the mission areas are also encouraged. Proceeds will go to the Apostolate for Persons with Disabilities and other projects of the Family Life Ministry. OLBL is located at 80 Washington Street, Merville Park, Paranaque.

ProductFILES

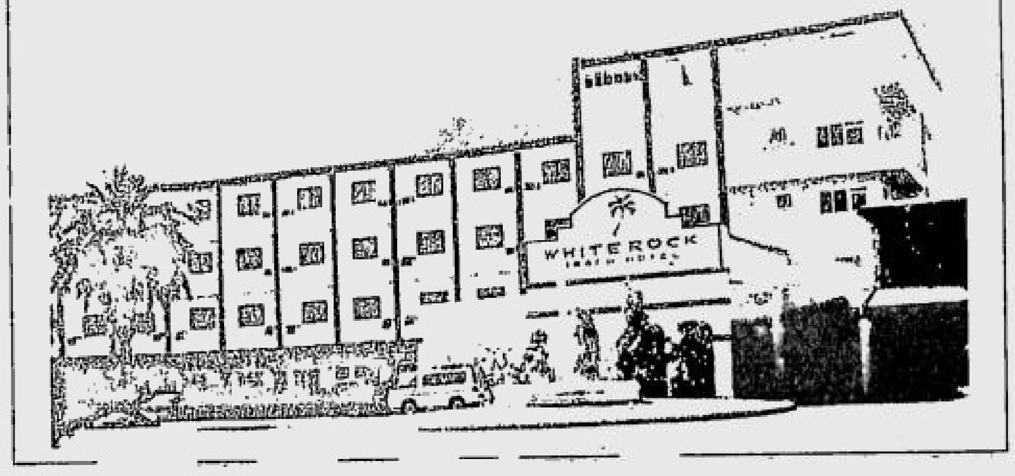
Group, family promo at White Rock

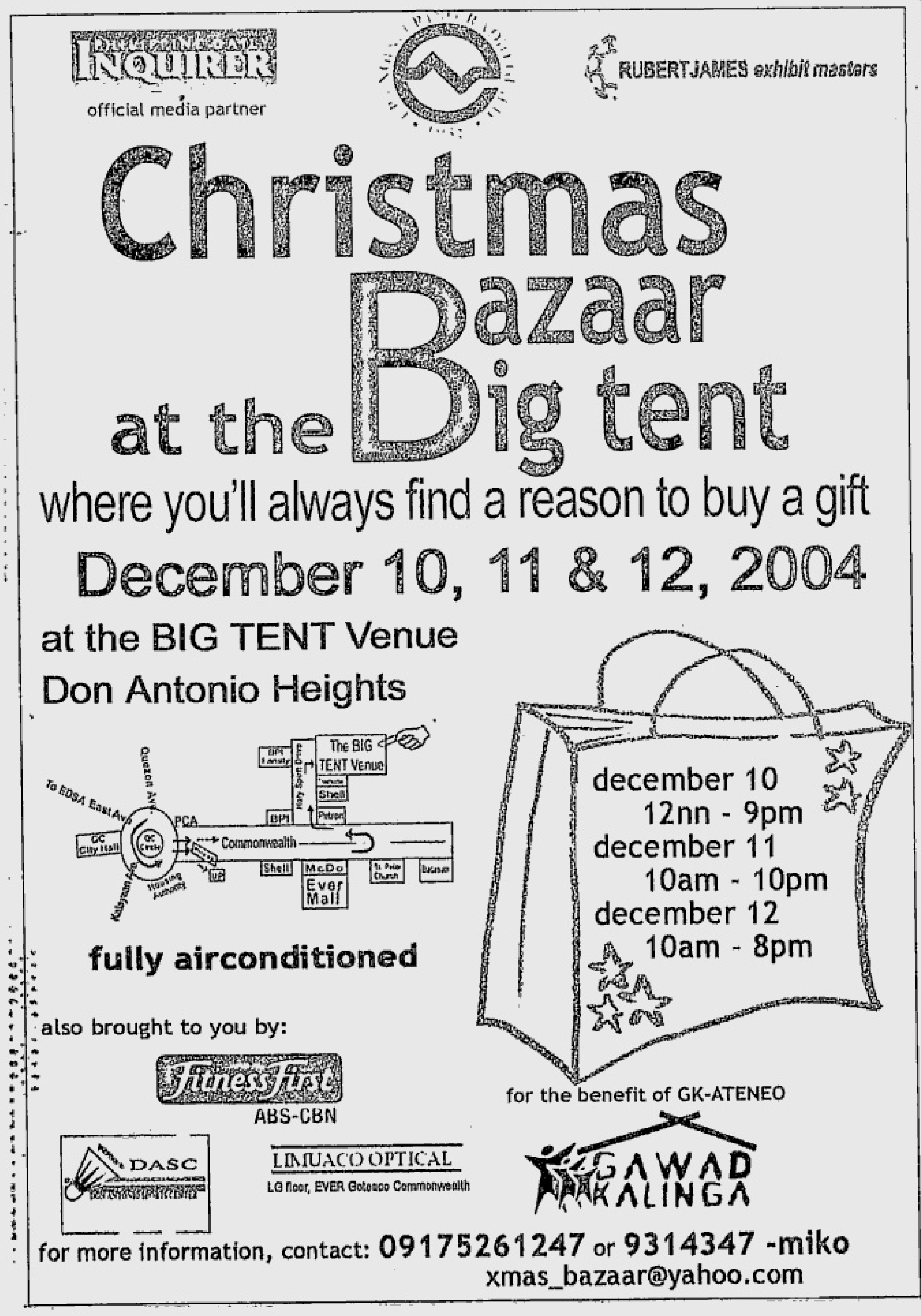
AN ENJOYABLE out-of-town vacation awaits you for some much-needed break from the city. White Rock, Subic Bay's premier beach resort hotel, "extends" the vacation season with its special group and family promo ongoing until Dec. 15. This means more chances to enjoy the resort's world-class amenities and outstanding views along idyllic Subic Bay at very affordable prices.

The resort certainly has more than the picture-perfect beach in store for its loyal patrons. White Rock guests can now spend all day for free around the six-hectare complex just sleeping under the trees in a hammock, play the hottest sport today-badminton; exercise their billiard, ping-pong or dart skills; work out in the gym; a playpen for kids; practice your vocal chords at the KTV/Bar; or just enjoy games or a bonfire by the beach.

For groups with a minimum of 30 persons, White Rock will offer the following: quad sharing in deluxe rooms; buffet meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner; snacks in between meals on weekdays; use of the beach and swimming pools; team building games; running coffee during seminar hours; dinner setup for big groups, along with a 4-man band; plus additional 10-percent discounts for the Health Spa & Salon for Men and Women; Ten Pin Bowling Lanes; the Souvenir Shop; and watersports services.

For all these exciting treats, the resort will only charge groups P1,500 per person. Upgraded guestrooms are equipped with mini-refrigerators, TV, telephone, private toilet and bath with hot and cold shower, and verandah. The hotel restaurant's upgraded menu also now includes international and Japanese cuisine. A new restaurant/grill by the beach is now operational. For inquiries, call 421-2781/82/84/86 or visit www.whiterockresortsubic.com.

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xmas_bazaar@yahoo.com

Clips

Shell sponsors workshop

PILIPINAS Shell Petroleum Corp, together with Asian Development Bank, the Partnership for Clean Air (PCA) and the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia), will host a workshop dubbed "Transforming Cities through Sustainable Transport Systems" Dec. 1 at the ADB Auditorium in Mandaluyong City. The keynote speaker will be Enrique Peñalosa, the former mayor and architect of the transport revolution in Bogota, Colombia. The workshop will be participated in by transport and air quality management advocates belonging to government, private companies, academic institutions, multilateral funding institutions and NGOs. Viable and sustainable solutions will be discussed and presented by MMDA chair Bayani Fernando. Enrique Peñalosa is an accomplished public official who served as Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia from 1998 to 2001.

Castrol launches 'Zoom Club'

ON DEC. 3, Friday, Castrol will make sure that all roads lead to Club Halo in Makati. A month after the nationwide Castrol Zoom Promo run, Castrol formally launches the Castrol Zoom Club's website and throws an exclusive and action-packed party to the "first 100" privileged members of the Castrol Zoom Club. Club Halo will be transformed into a motorcycle enthusiast's haven. There will be free motorcycle check-up clinics, opportunities to demo motorcycles of different makes and models, and, of course, hearty chows and drinks. The Castrol Zoom Club event will likewise offer something extra special to motorcycle groupies, single riders and bike enthusiasts from all rides and disciplines. Engines rev at exactly 7 p.m. For more information, call the Castrol Zoom Club hotline at 533-7798, or log on to www.castrolzoomclub.com.

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND NEXT

Japan, S. Korea sign on for Asean trade talks

VIENTIANE, Laos—Japan and South Korea joined the rush to court Southeast Asia, agreeing Tuesday to launch free trade talks with the region's leaders hours after they clinched a momentous open-market deal with booming China.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korea President and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun separately adopted accords with the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian nations agreeing to launch the talks early next year.

Both agreements aim for trade pacts within two years.

Australia and New Zealand were expected to sign similar agreement with Asean before the close later Tuesday of the group's annual summit—the first such international event ever held in impoverished member nation Laos.

Asean and China on Monday signed an accord aimed at phasing in the world's largest free trade area by decade's end—a sprawling market of nearly 2 billion people.

The Southeast Asian group's secretary-general, Ong Keng Yong, said it would expand trade between the regions from about $100 billion (euro 75.49 billion) this year to as much as $140 billion (euro 105.68 billion) by 2010.

The agreement not only opens markets, but eases fears that China would be a "strategic bully" in the region, said Denny Roy, a senior research fellow at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii.

"China has also tried to sell Southeast Asia on the idea that China's economic development is more of an opportunity than a threat to the region," Roy said. Asean also planned to sign a blueprint for economic cooperation with India.

The accords with China and India reflect desires by Southeast Asia to latch onto economies that are siphoning foreign investment from the region.

Asean members Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam joined host Laos in Vientiane for the summit.

The closed-door meetings opened Monday with an Asean-only session, followed by summits with partners China, Japan, South Korea and India, Australia and New Zealand.

The two Oceania countries were invited to the conference for the first time in a quarter-century to boost trade ties, but Australia's refusal to adopt Asean's nonaggression pact has been a major diplomatic irritant for the region.

Some countries are still angry about Prime Minister John Howard's comments in 2002 that he reserves the right to launch preemptive attacks in neighboring countries if terrorists there threaten his country or its citizens.

In Sydney, Defense Minister Robert Hill defended Australia's refusal to sign a nonaggression pact with Asia, saying "we are a peace loving nation."

"There's no question of attacking Asian nations," he said. "We are a peace loving country. We will protect Australians and Australian interests, but we are a threat to nobody."

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark was expected to join Howard in signing an agreement to start free trade talks with Asean. *AP*

Stock Option
Time Deposit

A WOMAN walks by a banking advertisement in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's economy is on course to hit the 7.5 percent growth target set for this year, the city's finance chief Henry Tang said, contradicting gloomier forecasts from leading business groups. AFP PHOTO

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Premiums Earned	1,324,302	1,067,284
Net Underwriting Income	465,615	276,938
Income From Operations[2]	141,942	(95,759)
Income From Investments	37.970	502,164
Net Income After Tax	159.647	373,925
Total Assets	2,297,319	8,523.977
Total Liabilities	1,543,604	4,894,735
Net Reserves	492,839	741,283
Net Claims Payable/ Reserve for Losses	31.433	559,061
Networth	753.715	3.629.242
Paid-up Capital	600.000	525,000

[1] Consolidated and combined with eStandard Insurance Corporation, formerly Zurich General Philippines

Property Insurance Treaty Facilities

Capacity	1.500,000	600,000
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This advertisement expresses the opinion of the advertiser based on the audited financial statements, interpolation[2] and surveys.

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Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

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Encourage people to go back to the provinces

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I READ your sound advice to your reader who was thinking of moving to the province. I wish to share my opinion.

The Philippines is my adopted home and after living in Metro Manila for more then a decade, I decided to move out due to traffic, pollution, stress, etc. I have been living in Baguio City for five years now. This was the best decision my family and I made especially since we are raising our five children. The place has great weather, clean air, fresh vegetables and low cost of living. The benefits are endless.

My work still brings me to Manila every Monday and Tuesday at the most, with the rest of the week spent working over broadband Internet. Through the cell phone, I am able to manage my business from Baguio.

If our government focuses on provincial development by providing good infrastructure and agricultural support, our major cities will not be as crowded and full of squatters. People from the provinces move to the city because they go hungry in their hometown due to lack of work and support. This drives them to the big city. They think they can find good work and have a good life. But this is a mirage.

I have toured many provinces and I have seen the hunger, unemployment, debt and poverty. Most of them think they are poor and hungry because they live in the province and if they can get an opportunity to go to the big city, they will be fine. I have tried in my small way to communicate the evils of working in crowded cities but this does not discourage people from dreaming to work in the glittering city.

I wish President Arroyo could truly make our provinces the engine of economic growth. Let us tell our city dwellers, gold is in the mountains and fields of provinces and not in the concrete jungle of Metro Manila. Let's start a "balik province" movement by coming up with serious and sincere development and opportunity packages. Let us provide land to young graduates of agriculture so they can work for themselves and become entrepreneurs. Let us bring down unemployment by encouraging the entrepreneurial mentality and discouraging the thinking of simply getting a job.

Let us spend for roads, bridges and a train system to the provinces. Let us provide subsidy, land and support for our agriculture enterprises. Let us start practicing self-reliance and patronize products made in the Philippines.

I can go on and on, but I guess you get the idea where I am coming from. I am a Filipino by heart, made my home here, and married a Filipina. My heart aches seeing the country going nowhere and people going hungry in the provinces. I wish I had more power to do something. Thank you for reading this outburst.

Filipino By Heart

I have decided to provide space for this feedback letter from a foreigner who has adopted our country as his home. It also extols the virtues of Baguio and provincial living. I totally agree with you on the need to create employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the provinces and other cities outside of the crowded metropolis. Surely, government has to do its part. For example, we all know that electricity often costs more in the provinces. It is also true that we have so much idle agricultural land that can be put to good use.

I remember a cousin of mine who years ago, was a public school teacher. He was married to another teacher who inherited some land. He wanted to raise *tilapia* and most of the commercial banks turned down his request for a loan to build his fishponds. But this person was very determined. He went to a government bank and secured a loan. He has proved cynics wrong that agricultural lands can't be converted profitably to fishponds. Today, he has a thriving business providing livelihood to over 50 people on his farm.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

What we also have to recognize is behind every successful provincial enterprise are plenty of failed enterprises that waste precious resources. There is a body of knowledge to effective and successful entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs have to acquire a mindset and set of skills to start a business or grow one. For example, to go into a business without a basic business plan is for me sheer folly. This year, our company, together with Optimus, Land Bank and Philippine Daily Inquirer had a learning event entitled "Business Skills for Everyone." We had thousands coming to listen and acquire knowledge. Next year, we hope to do a series, not just in Metro Manila but also in other major cities. In Ancilla, we have also created a small business bureau that caters to knowledge requirements of entrepreneurs offering reasonable consulting rates. This is made possible through technology using the phone or e-mail. We have fondly termed this service, "sachet consulting."

Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

(*Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to* advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

How do you get the most out of a negotiation?

DEAR WW: I've got a big negotiation coming up and I'm really rusty. I haven't negotiated a contract in decades. Any chance that I could get a quick refresher course?

Rusty

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

We can all learn something about negotiations from Doug Stead. In 1996, he got a speeding ticket for $75. He was incensed because the evidence against him came from a camera mounted along the highway. He sued to prove that it should take more than a photo to send him to court. After paying over $75,000 in court costs, Doug has now depleted much of his family's savings. Reminds me of the song, "I fought the law and the law won."

In negotiations, many of us are more like Mr. Stead than we'd care to admit. We get hung up in making a point and lose sight of the bigger picture. This applies in negotiations, work and outside of work. I've listed some tips below to help you keep things in perspective next time you need to negotiate. For more, check out "Pushing the Envelope" Harvey McKay (Ballantine, 1998).

Do you see the negotiation as a partnership or a war? It's a pity that so many negotiation "experts" are stuck on using war and sports metaphors. War is hell, but a negotiation doesn't have to be. Go in with a different mindset and you'll often find your more collegial attitude pays off.

Can you leave something on the table? I think this is the best place to start, consciously exploring how you can make the other side look good. Since most business relationships are more than a one-shot deal, it's dangerous to focus just on winning. I know that "win-win" is a horribly over-used term, but look for places to make the other side look good.

Do you avoid fighting over each detail? A negotiation is the sum of many parts. So resist the temptation to go nuclear on each specific detail that you've got to negotiate over. See it as a package where you need to give ground on some areas to get what's most important to you in others. Once you adopt this attitude, you'll be surprised to find how often things that are important to you are less important to them, and visa versa.

Do you take your time? Negotiations are seldom a sprint. That's why it's so important to take time to learn about the person and organization that you're negotiating with. A small amount of bonding on the front end can save a lot of pain later.

Do you avoid talking "out of school"? Remember there is a difference between being collegial and chatty, be very careful about what information that you share with the other side. To quote an old phrase, "Loose lips sink ships."

Remember, you won't be in good stead if you follow Mr. Stead's approach. Rather, use the advice above as your ticket to a better result.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: What is your secret to successful negotiations?

—Try harder, 42.1 percent

—Try softer, 37.5 percent

—Try to find someone else to do the negotiation, 20.3 percent

(*Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at* bob@workingwounded.com.)

DR. STEPHEN Covey shares insights during his seminar on "Building High Performing Organizations" organized by Center for Leadership and Change last Nov. 19 at the Dusit Hotel. RAFFY LERMA

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Telecommuting facilitates a new way of efficiency

By Manolita A. Gonzales
Contributor

IF YOU think being the ideal employee means going to the office on time come rain or shine, and staying glued to your desk from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., then smile. Telecommuting is changing that form of drudgery. The wonders of technology now enable more and more people to work at home or elsewhere using a computer linked to a company's network.

At IBM Philippines, telecommuting has been a way of life since 1998. "Employees are allowed to work anywhere at any given time as long as they meet their personal business objectives," said Anna Maria M. Roqueza, human resources and staff services manager of IBM Philippines.

Ideal work setup

Each employee is armed with a portable office that consists of a cellular phone and a think pad or laptop computer for sending reports or messages through the Internet. Employees hook up with the IBM computer system in the Philippines or abroad through lines that IBM leased from PLDT and Digitel.

IBM also operates a business center staffed by a pool of administrative people "who are more than secretaries. They are capable of getting pricing, preparing reports, communicating with clients in behalf of the field personnel," Roqueza said. "Those out in the field don't have to go back to the office just to file a report or request for a leave. Send the business center your soft copy of the report, they print it, submit it, fax it. They can do everything for you." Is someone missing in action? Call his or her cellular phone or use the voice mail to send or receive messages. If the boss wants to locate his staff, there is the Lotus notes calendar, which posts each employee's schedule and whereabouts.

Telecommuting seems to be the ideal work setup for IBM, where two out of three employees belong to the service/sales force and are out in the field almost always.

"It may be expensive initially because of the investments you have to put up," said Roqueza, referring to the lines leased from PLDT, the computer systems, laptops and thinkpads. But things have worked so well that in 2001, telecommuting expanded to include back office staff as well (human resource, finance and accounting staff). "Now," Roqueza added, "99 percent or practically everybody at IBM has at some point telecommuted."

Work-life balance

Telecommuting is part of IBM's corporate philosophy of promoting a "work-life balance," or ensuring that employees have a happy career and home life.

"The demands of a job are so high and stressful that sometimes, personal life suffers as people meet work requirements," Roqueza said. "If we are not able to provide employees with that work-life balance, they will not be productive. If an employee is happy, he will be able to work well. We all work to provide for our families."

Roqueza talked of a survey which showed that people, especially women, tended to resign after working for about 10 years, just when their professional life was peaking. They quit to start a family or

TELECOMMUTING/B17

Survive the vertigo of a working mom's life

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

THE HUSBAND is surfacing from a severe bout with vertigo. For an entire week, he was lost in a spinning dizzy world that swallowed up all his energy and his will power. A bad case of nasal congestion and fatigue conspired to put him through the torture. His ears played tricks on him, creating a sense of imbalance. He groaned, winced and yelled, as his mind took him on a wild rollercoaster ride. He felt himself whirling, turning and spiraling out of control, even though he kept perfectly still, tightly curled in fetal position. A website on vertigo aptly described the condition as the "hallucination of movement." You think you're moving but you're really not.

A hallucination of movement—isn't that what we working moms go through all the time?

We're constantly on the move, constantly trying to stand on our heads just to get all that we need to do done. We're spinning and twirling as fast as we can so that we don't drop any of the pieces of our juggling act. And then at the end of the day, we go through our to-do list and find there's very little we had actually accomplished. We spiral through our day, doing a lot but not really moving very far.

In the book, "Margin" by Dr. Richard A. Swenson, he explains women are reaching saturation point by trying to do just "one more thing." Long after many people would have called it a day, we're still cramming things in, pushing one more chore, squeezing in one more call. And yet, the more we try to fit in, the clumsier we become, the more mistakes we make, and the less able we are to listen. As a result, we find ourselves in the same spot we were before.

To deal with his vertigo, the husband had to choose his movements carefully. One fast turn of the head could send him spinning into oblivion. There was no way of telling which movement would trigger the ride. So he had to make sure that whatever the action was for, it was worth going through the nausea for it. Of course, he took anti-vertigo pills, but as his doctors told him, vertigo is a self-limiting condition. In other words, it will stop when it stops. They were not sure how long he would be trapped by it, all they know is that it would eventually end.

I propose we use some of the vertigo patient's wisdom to control the spinning in our own lives. Instead of trying to squeeze yet one more thing into our day, let's consider choosing more carefully and deliberately.

Before taking yet one more call, ask yourself: is this really critical? Is it worth the imbalance I will have to endure if I take it?

But what will the boss say? Even our boss understands that our capacity for stress is proportional to our ability to self-limit. Sometimes our boss is not aware of just how much we have on our plate. They're too busy looking at the larger business, they may not have a chance to look at your own particular load. That's not their fault, it's their job to keep their eye on the bigger picture. It's your job to keep your boss updated on your workload.

Regain your balance by simply summoning up the courage to question the value of the task at hand with the overall scheme of things and with the price we have to pay to accomplish it. There may be no anti-vertigo pill for the kind of hallucination we working moms go through, but the best way to keep steady is to decide where we want to put our energy—both physical and emotional. We have to make the choices that will matter most in the long run. Go for options that will help us live the life we really want to live and help us surface from the life we feel trapped in.

(An Mercado Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN. Feedback is welcome at an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

How to give and take criticism

ERROR!
AGRodrigu

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

PERHAPS the two toughest things to do are to give criticism and to receive criticism. Both sides of this dynamic exchange should be examined because if you are committed to your career and those of your staff, you will find yourself on each side of the conversation. These pointers will make the conversation more effective.

Select a good time. Always conduct a feedback session in private. Never conduct it when the person is too stressed to really hear what you are saying. If it is urgent, ask the person to "take five" and come back to meet with you.

Remain calm. If you are upset about an error, don't have the meeting while you are upset. Take a walk and have the discussion when you are calm. During the meeting, no matter what is thrown at you, remain calm. If it gets out of control, stop the meeting and set a time to continue.

Send a clear message. Don't beat around the bush. Be precise; let them know exactly what is not working and your suggestion for improvement. Have notes handy with specific details. Always criticize the behavior, not the person. Make sure the receiver understands completely by asking them to paraphrase or soliciting questions or comments from them. Once the other person participates in the conversation, you'll be able to tell if they understand the issue and your motivation for the meeting.

Start and finish properly. Some people say to start and finish with positive comments. However, if your positive comment is about good work, your critical message may get lost in the midst of the positive notes. Instead, start with a positive comment such as, "I care about your success, and the success about our department. That is why I wanted to meet with you." End with, "I am hoping we can work together to improve XXX and XXX will be much better because we addressed this together today."

Check with human resources. If you are unsure if your criticism is appropriate or legal, consult your human resources manager. In general, stick to job performance issues—duties and tasks the employee has the ability to improve.

Don't be repetitive. Don't hammer them over the head again and again. Make your point and move on. Conversely, if you feel your critic or manager is becoming repetitive, maybe it is because they are nervous, or maybe they are not sure they're getting through to you. Try saying, "I am glad you came to me and I understand."

When you are receiving criticism, focus on the issue. If your critic is not tactful, focus on the issue. If you are faced with an angry manager, be strong and cut through the noise for the underlying message.

Don't argue with the criticism. Accept it for the information submitted. Think about it after the meeting. If you feel it was untrue, schedule a follow-up meeting. Often the shock of the message can evoke an emotional response. It is better to collect your thoughts and schedule a second meeting.

Be sure to tell the critic that you appreciate his interest. Letting down your guard invites a relationship of mutual trust and sharing. Candid feedback helps people grow. If you are off track a bit, then a little criticism can steer you in the right direction.

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Is your boss a friend?

PEOPLE AT WORK *Pulse*

PEOPLE at Work and the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD) partner to listen to the heartbeats of working people through this People at Work Pulse. The results of taking this "pulse" will be published the following month in the Wednesday edition of People at Work. To quicken your response rates, Philippine Daily Inquirer and Ateneo CORD will be giving gift packages to two respondents to be drawn from those who replied for the month.

Winners from respondents of last month's survey are Christine Grace C. Sarmiento and Gerry B. Singson (please contact Ateneo CORD to claim your prizes).

1. How is your relationship with your boss? __________
(Rate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being excellent and 1 being poor)

2. What informal activities do you engage in with your boss after work? How often do you engage in the following activities with your boss?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Chatting about personal lives	1	2	3
Playing sports	1	2	3
Eating out	1	2	3
Shopping	1	2	3
Watching movies	1	2	3
Partying	1	2	3
Others: ______________	1	2	3

3. Do you consider your boss your friend?
_____ Yes _____ No

4. Do you think friendships with supervisors affect working relationships?
_____ Yes _____ No
(Pls. explain)

5. Does your organization discourage friendships between boss and subordinates?
_____ Yes ____ No

6. In your organization, is it common practice for a boss to be a godparent to a subordinates' child or to be a principal sponsor at a subordinates' wedding (or something of the like)?
_____ Yes ____ No

7. Your gender: ____ M ____ F

8. Your supervisor's gender: ____ M ____ F

Name: ______________________________
Gender__________ Age: ______ Civil Status: __________
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Mail or fax this form or email/text your answers to:
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Fax answers to 426-6065 or e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph or text answers to (0920)831-9522. Write: topic 1.(answer), 2.(answer), etc. name, gender, status, position, company, address, contact numbers or e-mail.

Ateneo CORD offers HR seminars for 2005

ATENEO CORD (Center for Organization Research and Development) will be offering public training programs on the following for 2005: Organization Development, Strategic Training and Development, Talent and Career Management, Human Resources Planning and Staffing, Performance and Rewards Management, and Employee Relations and Well-Being.

The Center will also conduct special workshops on The Human Resources Management Series such as: Adult Learning Methodologies, Training Assistant Development Program, Measuring HR Effectiveness, Managing Human Capital, Organization Development for Line Managers. They will also conduct a program on The People Management Series which includes Managing Employee Performance, and Developing Emotional Intelligence.

For inquiries, contact ATENEO CORD, 2nd floor, Höffner Building, Social Development Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108, Philippines or call 426 5931, 426-6282, fax 426-6065 or e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph.

Telecommuting facilitates a new way ...

From page B16

focus on their families.

"In a lot of cultures, especially Asian cultures, it's still the woman who's expected to mind the house," Roqueza said. "IBM realized that we actually lose out by not listening to the needs of employees, particularly the women who compose half of our workforce. If 50 percent of our employees want to quit to become a mother when they reach the productive age, we lose out on that resource. That's when IBM started to think of work-life programs such as telecommuting."

Win-win arrangement

"I was in sales when we first did it," said Arsenio Samaniego, now country manager for strategic outsourcing of IBM Global Services. He was often out in the field but had to hie back to the office to write and file his reports, fill out forms, etc. He went back to the office even on Saturdays to catch up with his e-mail. "Now, no more late hours for me," he said. "I can still work late but in the comfort of my home"

Roqueza enumerated the benefits of telecommuting for parents, especially working mothers like her. "I know how it is when your child is sick and you have be at the office. I was physically in the office but my mind was on my sick child at home. I don't think I was very productive then. Now when a child gets sick, the mom or dad calls to say they will work from home. The parent has peace of mind and the child feels more secure that his parents are home when they are needed most."

The system also gives parents the flexibility to attend a parents-teachers council meeting, bring or fetch kids from school, then resume working. The employee is also able to save on transportation, lunch, office wear, makeup and whatever expense incurred in going to the office.

If telecommuting employees are happy, so is the company. Productivity has improved since the system was introduced. "Ten, 12 years ago, our sales transactions were in the hundreds," said Samaniego. "Today, we sell by thousands of units a year. Before, salespeople made only two customer calls a week. Now they make three to five customer calls a week, although the number of personnel is about the same."

"In everything that we do, we have to make sure that the business will not be impacted," Roqueza said. "We are not here as a charitable institution. There has to be give and take. Telecommuting is a management initiative and it's also self-serving. Since all our employees have computers, he or she can still work at home if something comes up in at night. They can continue working at home when there's a typhoon or flood, or during holidays if they need to deal with IBM offices in other countries where it's not a holiday. We just provide compensating leaves."

Changing mindsets

When IBM introduced telecommuting in 1998, both bosses and employees did not exactly jump for joy. How do you manage people when you don't see them, dumfounded managers asked.

Employees who started working at home felt spied on when their managers called up to check on what they were doing. So back to the office they went.

IBM's human resource division took several steps to open people's minds to the new system. One was to hold classes to train managers how to "manage remotely." "We told the managers that they have to manage by objectives," said Roqueza. "If you've given an employee (an assignment), it shouldn't matter if he sleeps an extra 10 minutes so long as he gets the work done."

Another step was to remove all the desks of the services/sales force to break the going-to-office-daily habit. In case they need to do business in the office, IBM has reserved for them an entire floor which is lined from end to end with cubicles. Each equipped with a desk, shelves, a telephone and porthole for linking with the Internet. Along the corridors are also several counters with computer ports where you they can download data the way you draw money from the ATM.

This arrangement has resulted in savings in electricity and office space. "In the old setup, the ideal ratio was one person per desk," Roqueza said. "Now that most people are telecommuting, the ratio is three persons per desk because it's unlikely that everybody will come at the same time. So there are intangibles that have become real savings for the company."

Ground rules

"Telecommuting is not only a technology solution," Samaniego said. "There is the management and human side. IBM went through a transformation in terms of measuring performance."

Thus, there are ground rules for telecommuters. The most important of these is the personal business commitment, or PBC, which each employee prepares in consultation with his/her manager. The PBC spells out what an employee plans to accomplish for the year and becomes a basis for measuring performance.

"It's not easy to manage when you don't see your people," Roqueza said. "We have to have measurable objectives and a way to check up every so often. If an employee is not really working, you will find out right away."

Another rule is that employees have to be "contactable" from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m and must return calls within two hours. "If somebody calls you and you never answer, then there's a problem," said Roqueza. "When you go on vacation or leave, update your voice mail so people know where you are. It's also a matter of discipline."

IBM also requires weekly one-on-one meetings between staff and managers, and monthly meetings for the whole team. "Regular interaction is also important," said Roqueza, referring to the need to develop "IBMer" traits in each employee. "How can you tell that one is an IBMer? There's something about the way they walk, talk, and work. You can only pick that up if you have regular interaction. Otherwise, *watak watak na*."

Finally, new employees are discouraged from telecommuting on their first six months, They need an office setting to imbibe the company culture, meet coworkers and clients and work with senior employees.

Roqueza said that in her four years with IBM's human resources services, there were only two employees caught abusing telecommuting. "The system has taught us to be more responsible," she said. The more restricted you are, the more people will find ways to fool you or go around the system. When you give more freedom to a person, they take it more seriously."

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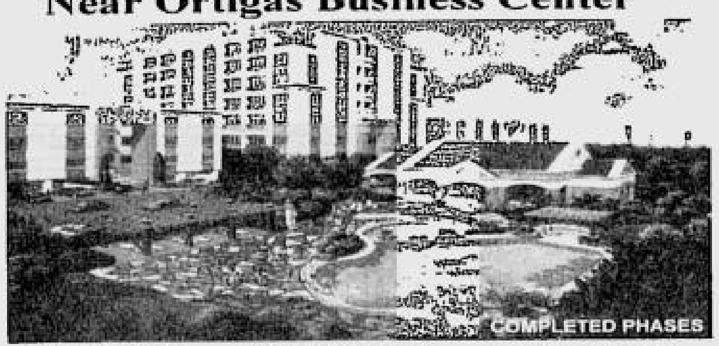

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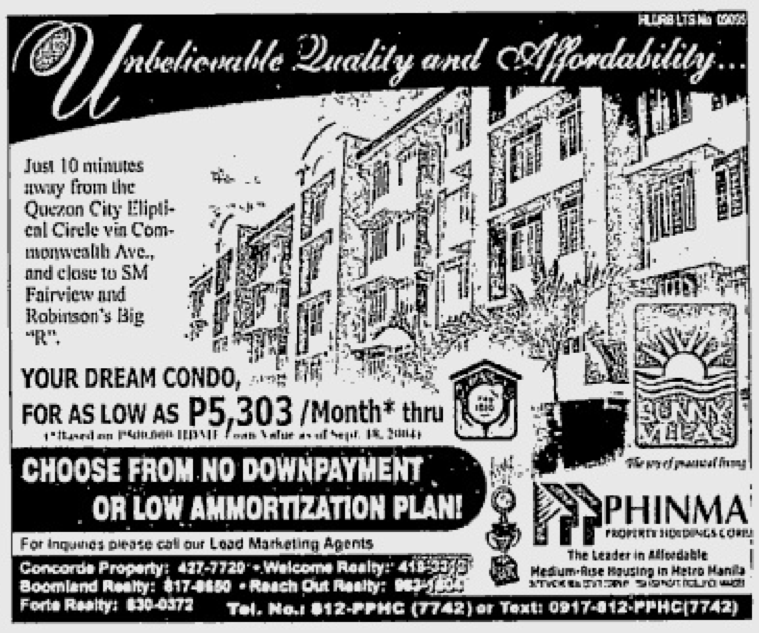

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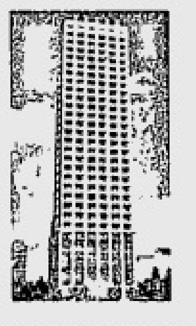

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Right in the middle of the Makati central business district • Spacious, neo-contemporary-style grand lobby • Executive studios and one-to two bedroom homes with balconies overlooking the city • Deluxe play amenities such as a swimming pool with landscaped sun deck, mini-gym, multipurpose function room and laundromat • 24-hour security • Multilevel carpark
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HOUSE & LOT

QUEZON CITY

PROJ.4 BNEW 3BR/2TB 1CAR 0917-8540472;683-0677

MAKATI

Mktl Villages Best Buy! Investment 09189392979

SHANG GRAND/SERENDRA Pre Selling 0918-9392979

MANDALUYONG

Sacrifice Sale - FATIMA 5322115 0917-8255123

QUEZON CITY

QUEZON CITY

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Phase 4 2 units SOLD / 1 reserved / 1 left & ready for immediate occupancy
Phase 5 4 units, completion Dec 2004
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Easy Payment Terms, Bank & In-house financing avlble
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Email: jubvilla@info.com.ph
www.jubileevillas.com

HOUSE & LOT

MARIKINA

Bnew 4BR 3TB 2.8M 9487112

BULACAN

STA. MARIA 225T 9372688

CAVITE

BACOOR 650T 09202434690

LAGUNA

BINAN 400T (0927)8438231

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.1M C5 Nr The Fort 10T/mo. or 4Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mktl 0917-8313226

MAKATI CONDO
1,2,3BR Ready to Move-In
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RFO GLOBAL CITY 94SQM 2 PRK P6.5M 09175213838

Rnt 2 Own 17Kmo 50K-move In nr DFort • 0918-4131377

CONDO/TWNHSE

MANILA

Condo@D'Fort Rockwell Legaspi Salcedo Village Liz 7260137 7243019

Goldland Cubao 2BR w/TB prkng Liz 7260137 7243019

INVESTMENT PROP - Nr UST 260 sqm 5 Drs 8M 6341212

LGV 3BR w/TB parking Liz 7260137 7243019

PASAY

3BR 3TB NR CULTRL CTR 10T 9530642

PASIG

1.6M ORTIGAS AVE. RESORT-TYPE, 1st Class 2-4BR P13T/ mo. or NoDP or 0% Bess • 0917-5234223

CRISANTA TOWER 6341212

QUEZON CITY

ALPHA VICTORIA NEW MLA LA116 FA236 8M 6341212

Eastwood City 36m³ 2005 TurnOvr 1.8M w/Assume Bal. w/Parking 0917-8086045

Eastwood Olympic Hts.1 46m² 21/Flr BrandNew 3.1M 721-77-78 or 0917-8986045

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

TAGUIG

PACIFIC TWR 23m² Rush! w/income embasy 09189392979

LOT

QUEZON CITY

LOYOLA GRAND VILLAS choice lots w/ view, Sweden & Finland St avble 426-5650, 929-1832 • 0919-8212235

OTHER AREAS

TAGAYTAY nr ROTONDA w/ view 569; 517; 489; 374sqm P7000/sqm T-6337601/03

BATANGAS

MLARAYAT 863SQM 6341212

BULACAN

144m² Hgls Subd. 0919-7104059

COMMERCIAL

SAN JUAN

4-STOREY BLDG IDEAL FOR OFC W/WAREHOUSE LOT AREA 523M² FLR AREA BLDG 500M² FLR AREA WRHOUSE 200M² FLR AREA XCLUDE 6CAR DRIVEWAY SAN JUAN P16M 0917-8466242 MIKO

MEMORIAL LOT

North Cemetery near Main Road along 24th street family lot for 4 nice location P220k Call 911-4510

FACTORY/WHSE

QC Pasig Sucat Vinzuela Areas etc. 7260137 7243019

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

COMMERCIAL

QUEZON CITY

ONE BURGUNDY PLAZA KATIPUNAN Q.C. FRNT ATENEO FA103, 75, 50 m² IDEAL FOR SPA GYM CALL CENTER 9289541 / 7361925

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

MAKATI/MONTHLY/YEARLY CTLAND 9 Leg. Vill. 2BRFurn 20T 09154012532 T-8134038

MANILA

BAYBRIDEG HOMES NR NAGTAHAN BRIDGE 9289541/7361925

PARANAQUE

WESTMONT-SUCAT 1BR PRKG T/B A/C NR CLUBPOOL 09272107234

QUEZON CITY

PHILAM HOMES FRNT EDSA QC Bldg 2 UNT 7 9289541 7361925

PHILAM HOMES FRONT EDSA Bldg 2 UNIT 7 9289541 7361925

APARTMENT

MAKATI

2BR U/D STRNG H²O P8.5K Call 757-7442

ROOM & BOARD

Chin Gen Area 711-8679

P200I Sucat, Pque 8275345

BEDSPACE

Mktl nr Ayala P1T Ldy 7257342

Resdn'l/Furnish 2PerRm Male Single Bed T897-3770

BUSINESS RENTAL

AYALA AVE 8181090/7586

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Students and part-timers are also welcome to take part in this rare opportunity to be a pioneer in the above business.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS
are invited to come on December 4th, Saturday, at 2:00 p.m.

Natural Filipinas Corporation, Ground Floor, Calderon Bldg., 827 EDSA, Quezon City
(between and about 250 meters away from MRT Terminals of GMA-7 and Quezon Avenue)
www.multi-line.com.ph/nfc.htm • inquiry@multi-line.com.ph

Naturál

In life, sometimes the rain pours, sometimes the sun shines.
But it takes both the sun and the rain to make the plant grow and for us to see the rainbow.

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

BUSINESS RENTAL

BURGUNDY PLAZA KATIPUNAN Q.C. FRNT ATENEO FA103, 75 & 50 m² 9289541 / 7361925 IDEAL FOR SPA GYM CALL CENTER

Dental Clinic For Sale/Lease Rm224 Atrium Bldg Makati •811-4071/823-6047•

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

BUSINES DOCTOR 524-3197

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MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

MAKATI

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

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Essensa/Regent/Rockwell
Paseo Park View/Alpha-std
ChangGrand Twr/Serendra
Columns/Prince Plaz2/U1514
Nice Tagaytay Hihglands
Ayala/Britany/Megaworld
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OTHER REAL ESTATE

REALTORS/SEMINAR

BROKERS CEP 4382966

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

HONDA

'96 CIVIC VTI A/T BLUE 285T NEG 0917-5334950

TOYOTA

Rush Sale! 93 Tyta GLI 09192197301

MITSUBISHI

CANADIAN EMBASSY
VEHICLE FOR SALE BY CLOSED BIDS
MITSUBISHI MONTERO 2000
WELL MAINTAINED, GOOD RUNNING CONDITION FOR MORE INFO PLS CALL 8579181 OR EMAIL ADD: melanie.yap@international.gc.ca LOOK FOR MELANIE YAP DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION DEC. 03, 2004 1 : 30 PM

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2 FEMALE ENCODER
Familiar in Excel/Word
Bring bio-data w/ picture
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1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o Taking Car 5315577

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

APPLIANCES

AIRCONDITIONERS
Ceiling Type, 2Units MC Quay, 3 Tonner, 4HP, 4Way Split Type, Almost New 534-5632 Off Hrs

BUY/SELL

College Plans 0917-7939632

TPG,Prud EducPlan2528373

PETS

Dog Trainer 0919-2050952

LAB CHOCO 2½mos chline 0920-4040851/421-6219

ROTTWEILER PUP W/PAPERS 5mo 4008609 0919-2666391

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given to all creditors of POLARIS TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC., with business address at West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City to present their claims, no later than 31 December 2004 to MR. AGUSTIN PEREZ or RIZA MARI CALDITO of KPMG LAYA MANANGHAYA & CO., with Tel. Nos. 885-7000 or 893-8507 and Fax Nos. 894-1985 or 816-6595, ATTN: AGUSTIN PEREZ.

Any claims against Polaris Telecommunications, Inc., which are not presented within the prescribed time, shall be deemed to be waived.

(PDI-Nov. 29, Dec. 1 & 3 2004)

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

SHIH TZU PUPS 8123216

CONSTRUNCTION MATERIAL

GENSETS
CONCRETE PUMPS
IH TRANSIT MIXERS
STL SCAFFOLDINGS
CONST. ELEVATORS
TOWER CRANES
HOIST MACHINE
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7220433 • 4123543

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC., 1137 P. Gil St. Paco, Mla. Will sell all expired pledges of April and May 2004 on December 12, 2004, Sunday at 10:00a.m. Sons J Lanuza Auctioneer. (PDI-Dec 1 2004)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ALBERTO P VALDESCANO has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. No. 162; Page No. 34; Book No. 1; Series of 2004 before notary public Atty. Gregorio Salazar of Quezon City
PDI-Dec. 1, 8 & 15, 2004

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late GLORIA H. VILLAREAL who died on Nov 23, 2003 at Quezon City has been extrajudicially settled between her heirs on Nov. 19, 2004 under Doc. No. 5500, Page No. 81, Book No. 476, series for 2004 by Notary Public for Quezon City, Jose L. Ma. Santos.
(PDI-November 24, December 1 & 8, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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BUSINESS FOR SALE

TESDA Accredited Training Ctr 4 Caregvers 09195665377

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MALE/FEMALE

ASAP REGISTERED MED. TECH 841-9308 • 0919-5337703

SALES AGENTS
928-0512/0917-8941622

Vacant Position:
Div. of Pasig City/San Juan
MTCHR1-30003-2004
(Sgd.) Dr. Abella C. Macarandan
Schools Division Superintendent

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DIVISION
Main Office: PASONG TAMO, MAKATI CITY
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G/F ATRIUM BLDG., MAKATI AVENUE, MAKATI CITY
☎ 8114361 ☎ 8114370 ☎ 8114012 Fax 8925578
ST. ANTHONY'S BLDG., AURORA BLVD., QUEZON CITY
☎ 912-9008-11 Fax 912-9011
SM MEGAMALL, MANDALUYONG CITY
☎ 6350219 ☎ 6372008 Fax 6350220
G/F TRINITY BLDG., 636 T.M. KALAW ST., ERMITA, MANILA
☎ 5273342 ☎ 5280183 ☎ 5276357 Fax 5280213
ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY
☎ 8424503 ☎ 8506465 Fax 8506465
e-mail address: main_classifieds@inquirer.com.ph

OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Memorial Park
Mortuary
Viewing Chapels
Crematory
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Trunk Line: (632) 845-2334 to 38

The family and friends of

GENEROSO "GENE" B. MIRANDA III

lovingly remember and pray for him on his 20th death anniversary today.

TO LIVE IN THE HEARTS
WE LEAVE BEHIND, IS NOT TO DIE.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

ATTY. LUIS "LUISING" MUÑOZ ROMERO

Aug. 24, 1915 – Nov. 29, 2004
of Tanjay City, Negros Oriental

Peacefully joined our LORD on Nov. 29, 2004
at the age of 89.

We, the bereaved wife **Rosita**; children **Mike** and **Menchu**, **Mary Anne** and **Senen Orosa**, **Winnie** (†) and **Rowen Claravall**, **Chinky** and **Butch Alano**, **Sharon** and **Joef Cruzada**, **Jaro**, **Luigi**, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for his entry to paradise.

His remains lie in state at Baltazar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque (inside Manila Memorial Park) until Thursday morning, Dec. 02, 2004 and will be flown to Dumaguete City on the same day. Interment will be on Friday 3:00 p.m. at the Serenity Garden, Tanjay City, Negros Oriental.

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City
Tel. No. 3378812 / 3373549 Telefax 3364219

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City is inviting licensed Contractors and Suppliers to apply for Registration & Eligibility and to Bid for the following projects.

1. Construction of Multi-Purpose Warehouse at Brgy. Casalsagan, Pototan, Iloilo (Labor and Materials)
   Approved Budget P4,258,444.05
   Source of Fund : Production Support Component GMA Rice
2. Procurement of Postharvest Equipment for Hybrid Seed Growers at Brgy. Casalsagan, Pototan, Iloilo as follows:

2 units	Mabagya Flatbed Dryer (PhilRice Design), 6 ton capacity with 12 hp diesel engine (or 10 hp electric motor), blower and rice hull furnace
2 units	Grain Cleaner (PhilRice Design), chassis mounted with 2 pneumatic wheels and 6 hp gasoline engine
1 unit	Bag closer
1 unit	Weighing Scale, platform type, 500 kg. capacity
1 unit	Moisture Tester

Approved Budget P741,555.95
Source of Fund Production Support Component GMA Rice

Minimum Required Bid Security in any form:

Form of Bid Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	1%
Bank Guarantee	1 ½%
Surety Bond (Callable on demand issued by the GSIS or by surety or insurance company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner)	2 ½%
Foreign Government Guarantee	100%

The following are the related activities and schedule:

• Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, Registration & Eligibility Requirements	December 14, 2004 not later than 5:00 p.m.
Eligibility Check	December 15, 2004 9:00 a.m. DA War Room
• Issuance of Bid documents up to (after paying unrefundable amount of P1,000.00 for infra only)	December 16, 2004
• Pre-Bid Conference	December 17, 2004 9:00 a.m. DA War Room
• Deadline for Submission of Bids	December 31, 2004 9:30 a.m. DA War Room
• Opening of Bids	December 31, 2004 10:00 a.m. DA War Room

Bid proposals exceeding the stated Approved Budget shall be rejected outright.

All Bids shall be marked "DO NOT OPEN BEFORE (date & time of opening of Bids)" and addressed as follows:

The Chairman, BAC
Department of Agriculture RFU6
Parola, Iloilo City
Bid No. 2004-24&25

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or formality therein, and accept responsive proposals most advantageous to the government and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidders for expenses and losses that may be incurred in the preparation of Bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RICARDO D. OBLENA, CESO III
Regional Executive Director

DA website www.geocities.com/darfu6

(PDI - Dec. 1 & 7, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City
Tel. No 3378812 / 3373549 / 3376006 Telefax: 3364219

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City is inviting licensed Contractors/Suppliers to apply for Registration & Eligibility and to Bid for the Construction of One (1) unit Slaughterhouse for Iloilo City.

Approved Budget : P6,000,000.00
Source of Fund : GMA Livestock Program Continuing Appropriations

Minimum Required Bid Security in any form:

Form of Bid Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	1%
Bank Guarantee	1 ½%
Surety Bond (Callable on demand issued by the GSIS or by surety or insurance company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner)	2 ½%
Foreign Government Guarantee	100%

The following are the related activities and schedule:

• Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, Registration & Eligibility Requirements	December 14, 2004 not later than 5:00 p.m.
Eligibility Check	December 15, 2004 9:00 a.m. DAR War Room
• Issuance of Bid documents up to (after paying unrefundable amount of P1,000.00)	December 16, 2004
• Pre-Bid Conference	December 17, 2004 9:00 a.m. DA War Room
• Deadline for Submission of Bids	December 31, 2004 9:30 a.m. DAR War Room
• Opening of Bids	December 31, 2004 10:00 a.m. DA War Room

Bid proposals exceeding the stated Approved Budget shall be rejected outright.

All Bids shall be marked "DO NOT OPEN BEFORE (date & time of opening of Bids)" and addressed as follows:

The Chairman, BAC
Department of Agriculture RFU6
Parola, Iloilo City
Bid No. 2004-23

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or formality therein, and accept responsive proposals most advantageous to the government and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidders for expenses and losses that may be incurred in the preparation of Bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RICARDO D. OBLENA, CESO III
Regional Executive Director

DA website www.geocities.com/darfu6
(PDI-Dec. 1 & 7, 2004)

LIHUK Inc.

#0014 Balite Drive, Purok 11
Brgy. Santiago, Iligan City 9200
Mindanao, Philippines
SEC Reg. No. CEO 4220
Telefax No. 63-63-221-7393
E-mail us: lihuk@mozcom.com

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date November 26, 2004
Contract Identification No. LUIOO1
World Bank Grant No. TF026783

The **PARTNERSHIP OF PHILIPPINE SUPPORT SERVICE AGENCIES, INC. (PHILSSA)** has received a grant from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of **UPSCALING URBAN POOR COMMUNITY RENEWAL SCHEME-PROJECT** and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract No. LUI001 - Luinab Community Development Project. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*

The LIHUK-ILIGAN, INC., the Implementing Agency of PHILSSA invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction of Luinab Community Development Project.

Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased at LIHUK-ILIGAN, Inc. with address at No. 0014 Purok 11, Balite Drive, Barangay Santiago, Iligan City for a nonrefundable fee of P2,500.00 for each set. Interested bidders may examine the bid documents and obtain further information at the same address. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on December 16, 2004, 10:00 a.m. at LIHUK-Iligan Office at # 0014 Purok 11, Balite Drive, Brgy. Santiago, Iligan City.

Bids shall be valid for a period of 120 calendar days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security equivalent to 2.5% of the Contractor's Bid and shall be delivered to LIHUK-ILIGAN, Inc. with address at No. 0014 Purok 11, Balite Drive, Barangay Santiago, Iligan City on or before **January 3, 2005** not later than 10:00 a.m. at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.

BAC CHAIRPERSON

(PDI - Dec. 1, 2004)

Philippine National Oil Company
Exploration Corporation
Bldg., 1, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 840-2024, Fax No. 840-1459

PNOC

FOR SALE THRU SEALED BIDDING
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

RSDME No.	Description	Qty.	Minimum Bid Price (In Pesos)
011316	Junk / Scrap Metal & Various used tires	(estimated 2,000 tons)	MP5,640.00

The above items can be inspected on the place indicated below.

Location	*Contact Person/s*	*Telephone Nos. Fax No.*
Malangas Coal Project, Malangas, Zamboanga, Sibugay	D.G. Gacutan	(0919) 540-2154 (0919) 547-0630

Deadline for submission of sealed bids is on December 08, 2004, not later than 2:00 p.m., at PNOC-Exploration Corporation (PNOC-EC) bid box, Property Management, First Floor Building 1, Energy Center, Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila and Malangas Coal Project, Malangas, Zamboanga, Sibugay. Bids shall be then publicly opened at 2:30 p.m. on December 13, 2004 at the above address.

Bids documents are available at the above mentioned addresses c/o E. A. Ababol/ D.G. Gacutan upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (PHP5,000.00) per set. Ten Percent (10%) bids deposits in Cash or Certified/ Manager's check is required.

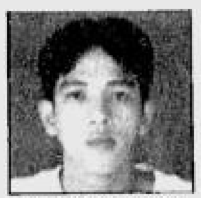
PNOC reserves the rights to reject any or all bids, waive any informality found therein and accept such bids as maybe considered most advantageous to its interest. The decision of PNOC EC shall be final and binding.

(Sgd.) Ricardo S. Basallo, Jr.
Administration Manager

(PDI - Dec. 1 & 2, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

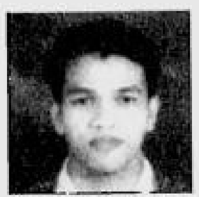
Public is hereby noticed that the following personnel are no longer connected with **WaterCare Marketing, (Phils.)** effective on the stated date.


RODERICK YUMOL
July 23, 2004

MELVIN GONZALES
August 15, 2004

RUDY SARMIENTO
July 22, 2004

RONITZ YBAñEZ
March 15, 2004


OLIVER TUBLE
April 30, 2004

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(PDI - Dec. 1, 2004)

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August 15, 2004

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August 15, 2004

RICARDO REMIAS IV
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GARY LUCAS
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Weak Japan data hurt yen, stocks

SINGAPORE—Weak Japanese industrial output figures knocked the yen and Tokyo stocks lower on Tuesday, but the stronger dollar underpinned other Asian stock markets and raised expectations for a higher start in Europe.

Gold fell further from 16-1/4-year highs as the dollar's recovery took the shine off its appeal.

Oil was flat after creeping closer to $50 a barrel in New York amid worries over a winter supply shortfall.

News that industrial output fell 1.6 percent in October from September, in the face of forecasts for a 0.1 percent gain, pushed the US dollar up 0.2 percent versus the yen and lifted Japanese bonds.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average ended down 0.72 percent at 10,899.25, but an MSCI index of non-Japan shares rose 0.08 percent to 255.56.

"Today's industrial production data didn't look too good, but it wasn't a great surprise for the market, which got a bit of support from the weaker yen," said Koji Muneoka, head of domestic sales trading for HSBC in Tokyo.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index touched a 3-1/2-year high before paring its gains to stand 0.18 percent up at 14,096.75.

Dealers said selling of the sickly US currency may not be over yet.

"The industrial output numbers were weak so that prompted the market to buy back dollars, but it's not giving it much of a lift," said Takashi Toyahara, a forex manager at Nomura Securities.

Traders said the foreign exchange market was likely to stay calm ahead of a slew of US data due this week, including payrolls figures for November on Friday, although the immediate focus was on preliminary US gross domestic product data for the third quarter.

Economists in a Reuters survey forecast annualized growth of 3.7 percent, the same as the advance estimate.

Asian rivals of Apple Computer in the music player market were heartened by broker upgrades for the US giant overnight.

Singapore's Creative Technology rose 1.5 percent.

E*Trade Securities, Japan's biggest online brokerage, rose 25 percent on its market debut as investors bet the strength of its earnings would help it weather a lackluster Tokyo stock market.

NTT DoCoMo added 2.3 percent after it signed a deal with mmO2 Plc allowing the British-based cellphone group to launch the i-mode Internet, games and ringtones service for mobile phone users in Britain, Germany and Ireland.

Shares in South Korean steelmaker Posco, the sector's most profitable company, hit an all-time record, but profit taking hit other Asian steel firms after a strong run in recent weeks on expectations of higher steel prices.

On other Asian stock markets, Singapore's Straits Times edged up 0.13 percent and Taiwan's benchmark index climbed 1 percent.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 hit a record high for a fifth straight day and closed up 0.12 percent, lifted by mining and bank stocks. South Korea's KOSPI was up 1.46 percent.

World stocks as measured by the MSCI eased 0.16 percent.

US stocks closed mixed on Monday. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 0.44 percent after Wal-Mart cut its November sales forecast and home builders eased on fears of higher interest rates. However, Apple led the Nasdaq Composite Index up 0.23 percent to a 10-month high at 2,106.87 on hopes for strong sales of its iPod music player. *Reuters*

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146万
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O 148万
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TOKYO stocks plunged Tuesday morning as investors were discouraged by Japan's weaker-than-expected industrial output for October. AP

Top studios take sides in DVD fight

LOS ANGELES—Three top Hollywood studios are throwing their considerable weight behind one of two competing formats for the next generation of DVDs, citing in part the need to stem piracy.

Paramount Home Entertainment, Universal Pictures and Warner Bros., which includes New Line Cinema and HBO, said Monday that they would start releasing films in the HD-DVD format in time for the holidays next year.

The announcement escalates the battle between HD-DVD, developed by electronics makers Toshiba Corp. and NEC Corp., and Blu-Ray, backed by Sony Corp., Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., which makes the Panasonic brand, and Philips Electronics NV.

Monday's announcements are nonexclusive and the companies said they may produce DVDs in both formats if consumers demand it.

But the announcement also put pressure on electronics makers to produce devices that support both of the competing formats.

Privately, entertainment industry executives say they cannot afford a format war and do not want a repeat of the confusion that slowed the early adoption of videocassette recorders when consumers were faced with choosing between Betamax and VHS.

While the Blu-Ray format can store more digital programming than HD-DVD, proponents of the latter say it will be cheaper for manufacturers because it is uses technology that more closely resembles that used in current DVDs.

"We think HD-DVD has a clear advantage in cost of manufacturing, ease of manufacturing and it will offer the consumer a great quality product," Rob Friedman, chief operating officer at Paramount Pictures, said in an interview Monday.

Blu-Ray has the support of Columbia Pictures, which is owned by Sony, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, which was recently purchased by a group led by Sony.

Blu-Ray also has wide support among consumer electronics makers and computer giant Hewlett-Packard, which said it will start selling PCs with Blu-Ray disc drives late next year, coinciding with movie releases.

News Corp.'s Twentieth Century Fox is a member of both the DVD Forum, which promotes HD-DVD, and the Blu-Ray Disc Association and has not said which format it would support.

Neither has The Walt Disney Co.

Both formats promise increased storage capacity and movie resolution superior enough to get the most out of high-definition TV sets. And both would contain stronger anti-piracy protection, a key factor in the studio's anxiousness to adopt a new format.

The software that protects current DVDs is easily circumvented.

Analysts say Monday's announcement could force a compromise between the competing standards.

"The studios should be pushing for compromise between Blu-Ray and HD-DVD and forget about trying to trump each other," said Harold Vogel, CEO of Vogel Capital Management in New York.

Toshiba plans to start selling its first HD-DVD products, a player and a recorder, and a laptop with a built-in HD-DVD drive in late 2005.

Yoshihide Fujii, corporate senior vice president overseeing the digital media business for Toshiba, said it is targeting annual HD-DVD-related sales of $49 million (euro37 million) in 2005.

Fujii said the spread of flat TVs is boosting the demand for high-quality digital movies and other content.

But Monday's backing by studios to release such expected blockbusters as Warner Bros. upcoming "Batman" and "Superman" sequels is critical to success.

"Even if we come out with the hardware, without content, it's just a box," he told reporters at a Tokyo hotel. *AP*

US manufacturing growth seen steady in November

NEW YORK—US manufacturing likely grew at a healthy clip in November although there was no visible burst in factory activity, a Reuters poll showed.

The Institute for Supply Management's factory survey for November probably inched up to 57 in November, according to the median of 30 economists' estimates, barely changed from last month's reading of 56.8.

Such a result would indicate respectable but not spectacular growth in US industry, which accounts for about one sixth of the overall economy. A reading above 50 indicates expansion.

Analysts will also watch the report's employment component for clues into hiring patterns in November, ahead of release of Labor Department payrolls data for the month on Friday.

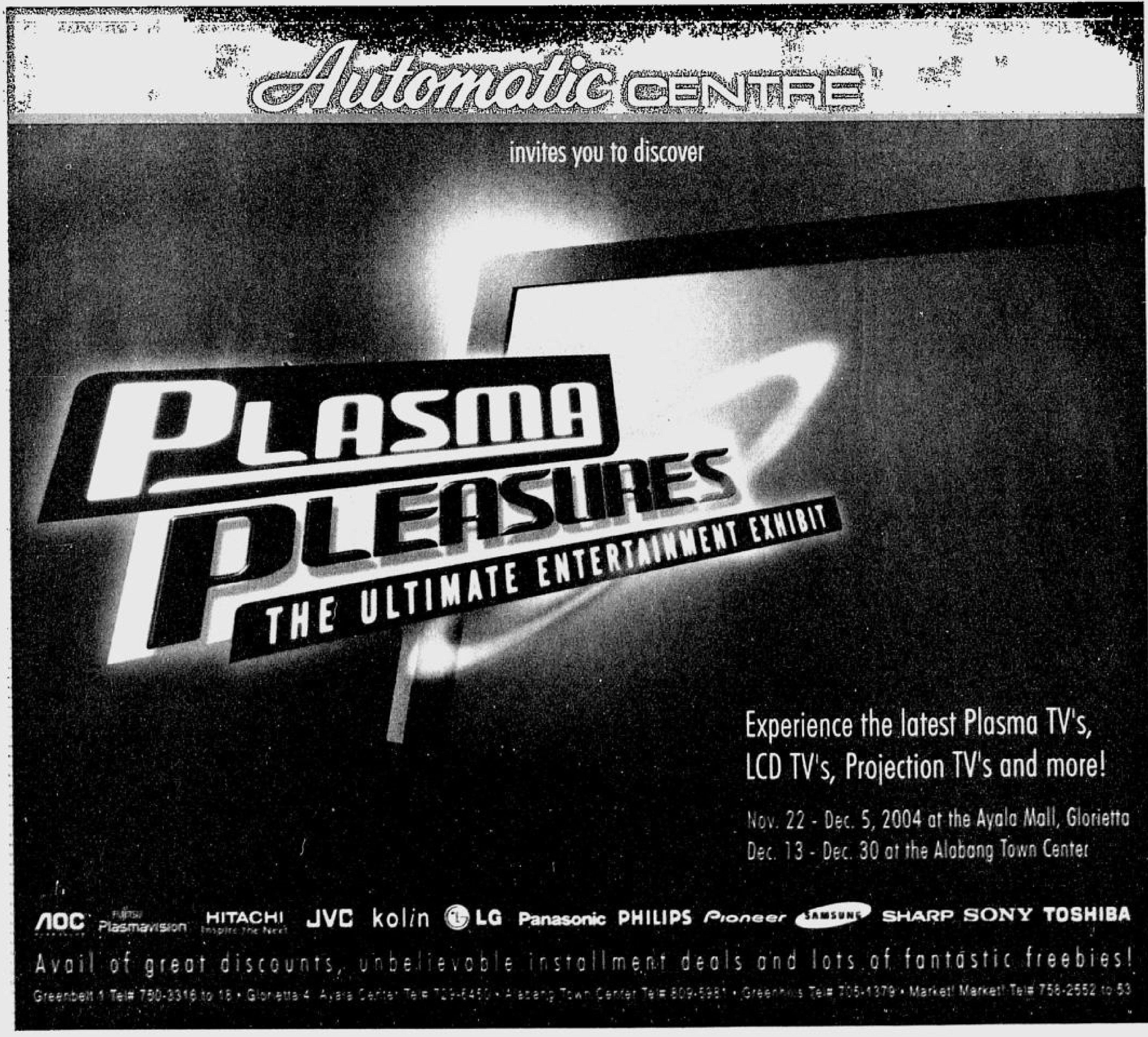
The ISM report is scheduled for release today.

"Our preliminary forecast for ISM is 56.0, a modest downtick from last month's 56.8. Philly and New York Fed indices remained generally healthy in November. After the longest streak above 60 since the early 1970s, ISM has fallen back to earth over the last three months. Restocking has slowed, as inventories are in better balance now (actually, too high in some sectors, such as the auto industry). The ISM Index is "normalizing" into more sustainable territory as a consequence, although the levels in recent months (as well as our forecast for November) are not "weak" in an absolute sense," said Credit Suisse First Boston, US Economics, New York.

The levels of the ISM indices correspond to growth rates in activity. According to Lehman Brothers, of US economics team, New York, "We expect the ISM to inch up in November, rising from 56.8 in October to 57.0. The index appears to be caught in a tug of war. The ISM has fallen since the summer. But the smoothly run presidential election and an overall improvement in business optimism may have boosted the index this month. We look for stronger readings from the production and employment indexes."

"The ISM Manufacturing Index dipped modestly. The regional surveys have been mixed but slightly negative. Factory activity still grew but at a much slower pace than earlier in the year," said Steven Wood, chief economist of Insight Economics, Danville, California.

Manufacturers continued to hire, albeit more slowly. Price pressures retreated a bit but remained intense." *Reuters*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Euro's strength against US dollar is 'unwelcome'

VIENNA, Austria—The euro's growing strength against the US dollar is "unwelcome," the European Central Bank chief said Monday, resounding his concerns as the common currency hovered just below a record high.

"As I have already said recently and repeatedly ... recent exchange rate developments are unwelcome," ECB president Jean-Claude Trichet said at a conference in Vienna on the challenges facing the countries of southeastern Europe.

The dollar sank to a record low of $1.3329 on Friday against the 12-nation euro currency on Friday.

After rising to all-time highs against the dollar on four successive days last week, the euro was quoted at $1.3284 on Monday.

Many analysts have predicted the euro could hit $1.40 by the middle of next year, and Trichet recently called the rapid increase "brutal."

Trichet, worried about a strong euro making European exports more expensive, has tried several times to talk the euro down, but the ECB has so far been wary of intervening more aggressively on its own.

A weak US dollar is generally bad news for Asian countries as well as European ones because it makes their exports more expensive.

The dollar has softened substantially in recent years, falling 20 percent against the Japanese yen since January 2002, when it hovered at about 134 yen.

Trichet's latest comments came ahead of Thursday's monthly meeting of the ECB governing council to set interest rates in the euro zone.

With European growth stuttering and the euro near its all-time high, "the outlook has changed and now they realize they were too optimistic in the past," Codogno said.

"This would suggest probably a long period of stable rates," he added. "I think they might even be a little bit more open also to the possibility of a rate cut at some point ... I think they will leave open all the possibilities."

He said his "baseline scenario" was for the ECB to raise rates next September.

Stefan Schneider, an economist at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, said he would be surprised if the ECB gave more verbal signals of an interest rate rise than it has in the past.

The dollar's slide has prompted many countries in southeastern Europe to favor the euro in international transactions.

Trichet noted that the use of the euro "has increased significantly in the region."

But he made it clear that switching to the euro as the international currency of choice is no substitute for making key economic and political reforms to qualify for EU membership, and warned the region's leaders not to circumvent the EU's membership criteria.

Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania hope to join the EU in 2007.

Other countries, including Serbia-Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia, also hope to join eventually but EU officials have said they are trailing far behind on key reforms.

AP

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KELSEY Reynoso, a 2-year-old girl, looks at toys in a catalog, as her family lines outside the KB Toys store inside the Glendale Galeria mall in California. The day after Thanksgiving is known as "Black Friday" in the retailing business because the surge of shoppers has been known to push stores into profitability for the year. AP

RISING WORLD DEMAND

Oil prices steady near $50 a barrel on winter fears, supply cuts

LONDON—Oil prices rose Monday as a gas leak closed a large Norwegian North Sea oil field and the threat of a colder-than-normal US winter fueled worries about low heating oil stocks.

North Sea Brent blend jumped $1.18 a barrel to $45.75 and US crude was up 32 cents at $49.76 after a four-day holiday break.

Prices rose as a gas leak forced closure of the 130,000-barrel-per-day Snorre A platform and the 75,000 bpd Vigdis field in the Norwegian North Sea.

Rising world demand has left little spare capacity in the world supply system, magnifying the impact of sudden disruptions.

In Canada, the 165,000-bpd Terra Nova platform has been shut for the past week for the investigation of an oil spill.

Crude is up 50 percent for the year and holding strong because of concerns that lean heating fuel stocks would leave the Northern Hemisphere ill-prepared to deal with a severe winter.

The US government last week reported that distillate stocks—including diesel and heating oil—had risen for the first week in 10, but that heating oil inventories were 16 percent below last year.

Analysts expected this week's inventory report to show distillates up another 1.3 million barrels, as mild weather in the Northeast caps demand.

While winter weather in the heavy-consuming US Northeast has so far been relatively warm, many forecasters are predicting a colder-than-usual season in the months ahead.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said Monday that while global stocks of petroleum products, including heating oil, remained below par, stocks were gradually rebuilding in consuming countries.

"The (crude) supply is a little bit ahead of demand. Inventories are building comfortably. I recognize some of the products such as heating oil are not at the right level, but as refineries come back from turnaround the market will be better balanced," he said.

Opec producers are enjoying less of a windfall than $50 oil prices suggest, as big discounts for their lower-quality crude and a weak dollar hit export earnings, Opec officials said on Monday.

The double drain on revenues has convinced Opec's second biggest producer, Iran, that the group should mop up some 900,000 bpd of leakage above formal supply limits of 27 million. Opec ministers meet on Dec. 10 in Cairo.

"I would say we in Opec have to go back to our quota first, because the market has 2 million bpd oversupply," Iran Opec governor Hossein Kazempour Ardebili told Reuters in a written response to questions.

Heavy falls in the dollar have also sliced into Opec members' purchasing power for goods and services from non-dollar economies, like the eurozone.

"I'm very concerned about the weak dollar and that will reflect on oil producers' decisions," Qatari Energy Minister Abdullah al-Attiyah told Reuters.

Opec has previously cited the US currency's weakness against other major currencies as justification for acting to keep dollar-denominated world oil prices high.

Reuters

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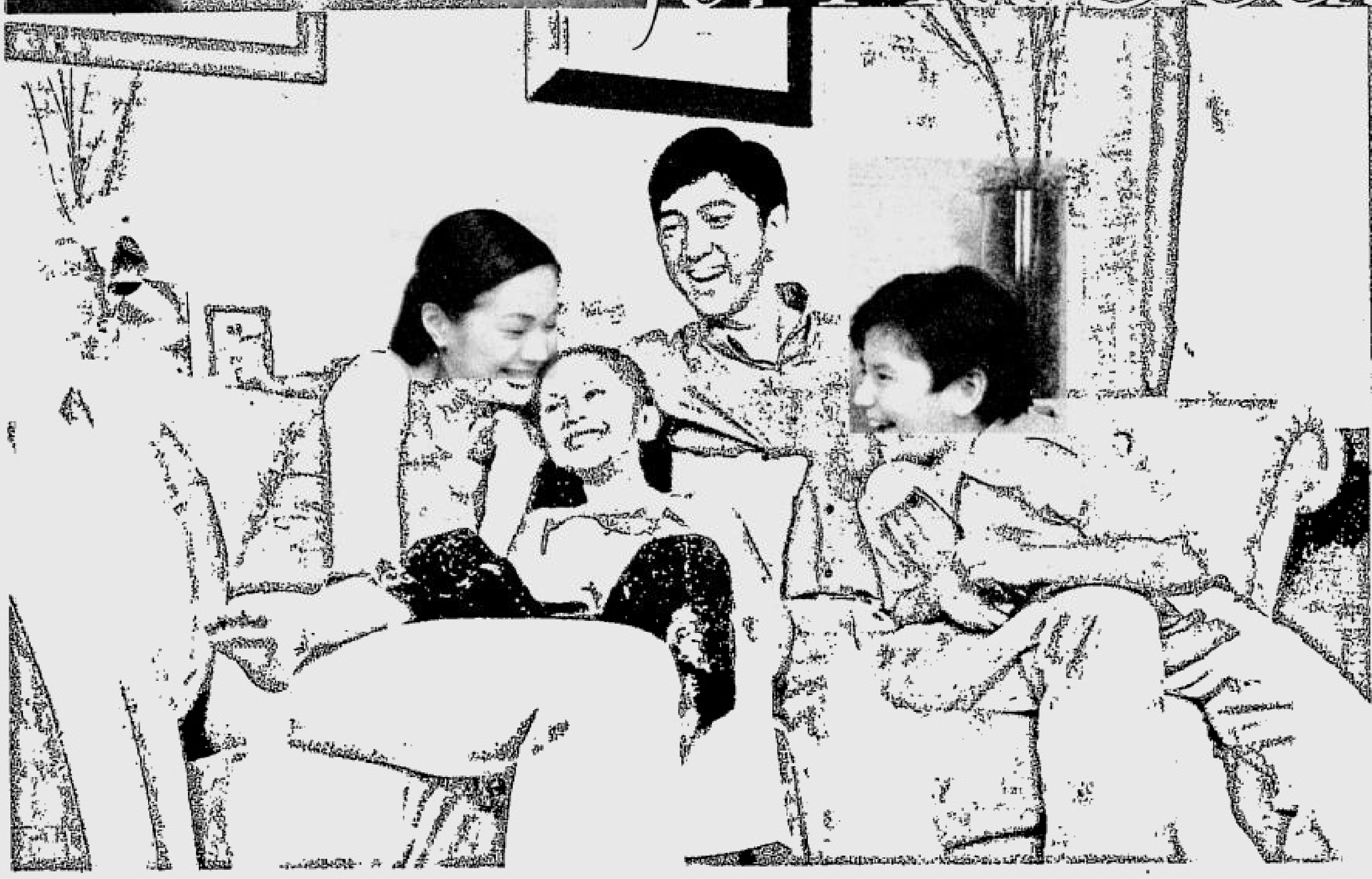

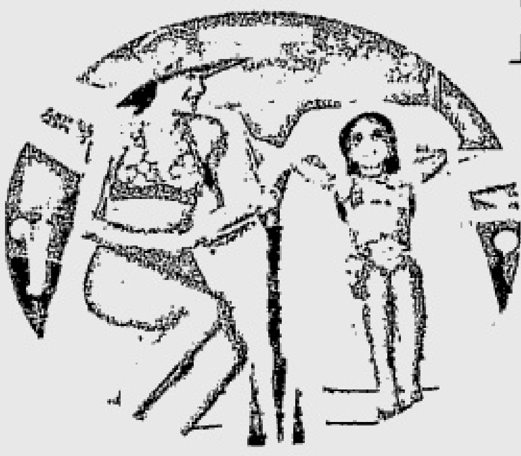

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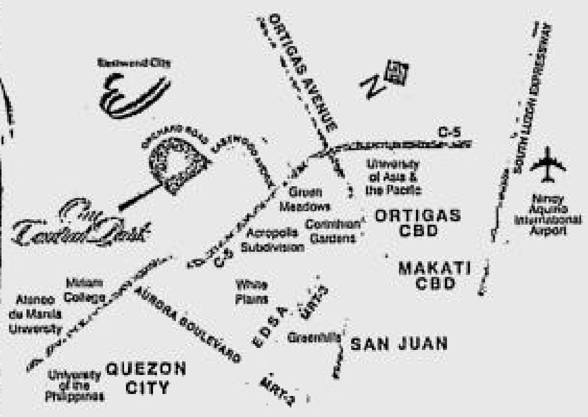
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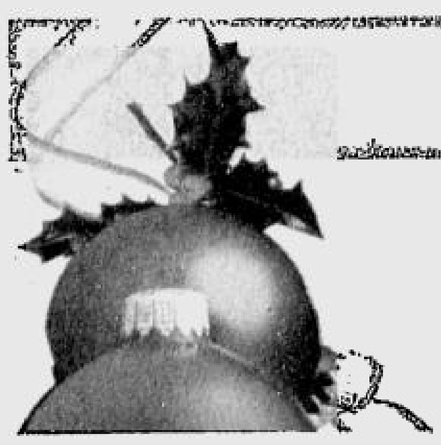

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NEXT in line...Peugeot 307—the North American Car of the Year's envy

FIRST TEST DRIVE IN ASIA

MB SLK 350: 0 to 100 in 5.5 seconds

By Tessa R. Salazar
Photos by Alex P. Loinaz
and Ulysses Ang (motioncars.com)

IT WAS the last of a six-weekend test fest. Members of the Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) were anticipating a slam-bang affair, what with the group saving the most exciting part of the test drives for the sport compact sedans, the roadsters, the speed demons of the highways.

But come race, er, test day at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club, the heat of anticipation was doused by some not so very good news. A promised Maserati was bought by a private buyer the previous week, a Ferrari was suddenly pulled out for display reasons in another car show, and a BMW Z4 was busy being put in its paces in a Subic track 200 km away.

Not all was lost, however, as Mercedes Benz came to the rescue and brought with it three of its own roadsters, one of them being the MB SLK 350—a rear-drive roadster powered by a new-generation 3.5-L V-6 double overhead camshaft with variable valve timing.

'Show stealer'

And, as expected, with literally no competition, the SLK 350 stole the show. It was clearly a fitting Asian debut for the SLK 350. Mercedes Benz introduced the 272-hp, 7G-tronic, 7-speed AT to the largest organized group of motoring journalists in the country with the singular purpose of choosing the car of the year for 2004.

For the "mojos" (my term for motoring journalists) who had been anticipating a speedfest the whole week, waiting in line to try the SLK 350 and experiencing an exhilarating 0 to 100 kph acceleration in just 5.5 seconds was excruciating.

Roadster 'spinners'

And so, while someone was driving the roadster, everybody else—Ulysses Ang, Andre Palma, Aida Sevilla Mendoza, Armin Amio, Lester Dizon—was trying to convince the other that he or she should go next.

Mercedes people, as well as the SLK 350, however, were game and took them all for a spin on the roadster. ABS-CBN's Ira Panganiban, RPN 9's "Autoextreme" host Ardie Lopez, "Autoreview" host Ronald delos Reyes, Tribune's Bam Olivarez, CI's Iñigo Roces and Chris Van Hoven, Philippine Star and autoindustriya's Raymond Young, Motioncars' Uly and Jason Ang, and Rev's Paolo Subido were also on hand to try the roadster.

Also present was Automobile Association of the Philippines director Mandy Eduque.

If we weren't enjoying the SLK 350's drive, we toyed with its shiny, retractable hardtop. After pushing the button, it took all 22 wonderful seconds to completely drop its top. It was fun to watch a hardtop fold across and down in one push of a button. The key fob can also remotely lower or raise the hardtop.

The SLK 350 boasts of torsional rigidity that is 46 percent greater than the previous model. The fun-to-drive gearing boasts of a superior range of ratios for all types of drivers.

Other test vehicles

Lest we forget, SLK 350 wasn't the only star of the road(ster) show. Two other MBs from CATS Motors romped with us throughout the weekend: the C240 Elegance and the E240 Avantegarde.

Apart from the MBs, three more vehicles were tested. There was the behemoth Nissan Patrol TDi, the cute Peugeot 307, and the elegant Toyota Camry 3-L V6. Well, it wasn't exactly the thrilling all-speed weekend that we expected, but an equally wonderful hodgepodge of characters on wheels.

Ever-reliable marshals for the six-weekend test fest were veteran rally drivers Raul Asuncion, Barry Ortiz, Denise Santos, Joey Lanuza, Art Guevara and Ivan Isada.

Worth P100M

In the end, close to 60 cars cumulatively worth P100 million and commercially available in the Philippines were tested and scrutinized by 50 local motoring journalists, who then voted for their choice of Car of the Year for 2004. The results of the evaluation forms were then sealed for tabulation by auditing firm SyCip, Gorres and Velayo (SGV).

The pioneering Car of the Year Philippines, the first of its kind in the country, has been made possible with the help of the AAP. Coty-P will hold its glittering awards ceremony in February 2005.

GETTING ready to romp before the actual test.

Horsepower

COMMENTARY

By Andre Palma

HORSEPOWER is probably the most misrepresented and misunderstood term in the world motoring industry. Vehicle manufacturers and aftermarket speed mongers sell it like sex and the salivating motoring masses just can't get enough of it.

Who can blame us? When we speak it, the word rolls off our tongues and leaves our imaginations idling. The mere combination of its words is both virile and potent. It represents the unstoppable force that has no immovable object in its path. The image, in our collective unconscious, of a horse at full gallop, muscles taut, mane blowing in the wind and nostrils spewing steamy hot breath with the Magnificent Seven theme in the background, is purely exhilarating and, oddly, makes me want to light a cigarette and take a long drag.

Why is it so important? What is it anyway? Why are there so many kinds being sold to us, like HP, Ps, BHP and kW? Is 220 horsepower, under the hood of your brand-new Nissan Cefiro 3.0 V6, actually equivalent to having 240 equine entities pulling you forward? Well, the actual answer is that it depends on what unit of measurement you use.

Applied to steam engines

The term was initially coined during the industrial revolution and was applied to steam engines. If your steam engine could replace the work done by four draft horses in a day, then you had a four horsepower steam engine. The expression stuck and is used in common terms today to describe a unit of power.

An imperial (British) horsepower (HP) is technically defined as the ability to do work at the rate of 33,000 ft lb per minute or 550 ft lb per second. This was measured by James Watt (1736 to 1819), the inventor of the steam engine, and is actually based on careful measurement of what a horse is typically capable of. On the other side of the world of measurement is metric horsepower, defined as the power required in raising (against the constant of gravity) a mass of 75 kilograms at a velocity of 1 meter per second. This unit of measurement is what is referred to when we see the unit Ps, or Pferdestarke (German, literally meaning horsepower). Metric horsepower is 0.986 of an imperial horsepower unit.

The kilowatt (kW), which is the official Systeme International d'Unites (SI for short) measure for power, is used commonly to measure the output of engines in Europe and Australia, and is often quoted along side metric horsepower. The conversion factor for kW to HP is 1.341 (one kilowatt is 1.341 horsepower). BHP, on the other hand, stands for brake or shaft horsepower measured by a dynamometer or engine brake. This, in principle, is supposed to take into consideration physical losses from engine inefficiency and other automotive systems robbing power from the engine.

Therefore, the aforementioned Nissan Cefiro 3.0 V6, a car with a claimed 220HP (imperial), would have 216.92 Ps (Pferdestarke, metric HP) and 164.06 kW (kilowatts in SI). BHP then would be determined by a dynamometer and be net of accessories.

Horsepower serves as insight into how much the engine can dish out but it cannot give us the entire picture of a car's physical performance. Physical laws, such as gravity and aerodynamics, dictate that a vehicle's weight and drag coefficient (its efficiency in cutting through air) play significant roles in acceleration and attaining speed quickly. Interesting also is the role played by tires in the whole equation of vehicle acceleration. The larger the contact patch, or physical surface area of rubber, connected to the ground, the more of your engine's power is actually used to move the vehicle forward and not lost in slippage and spectacular tire smoke.

Best solution

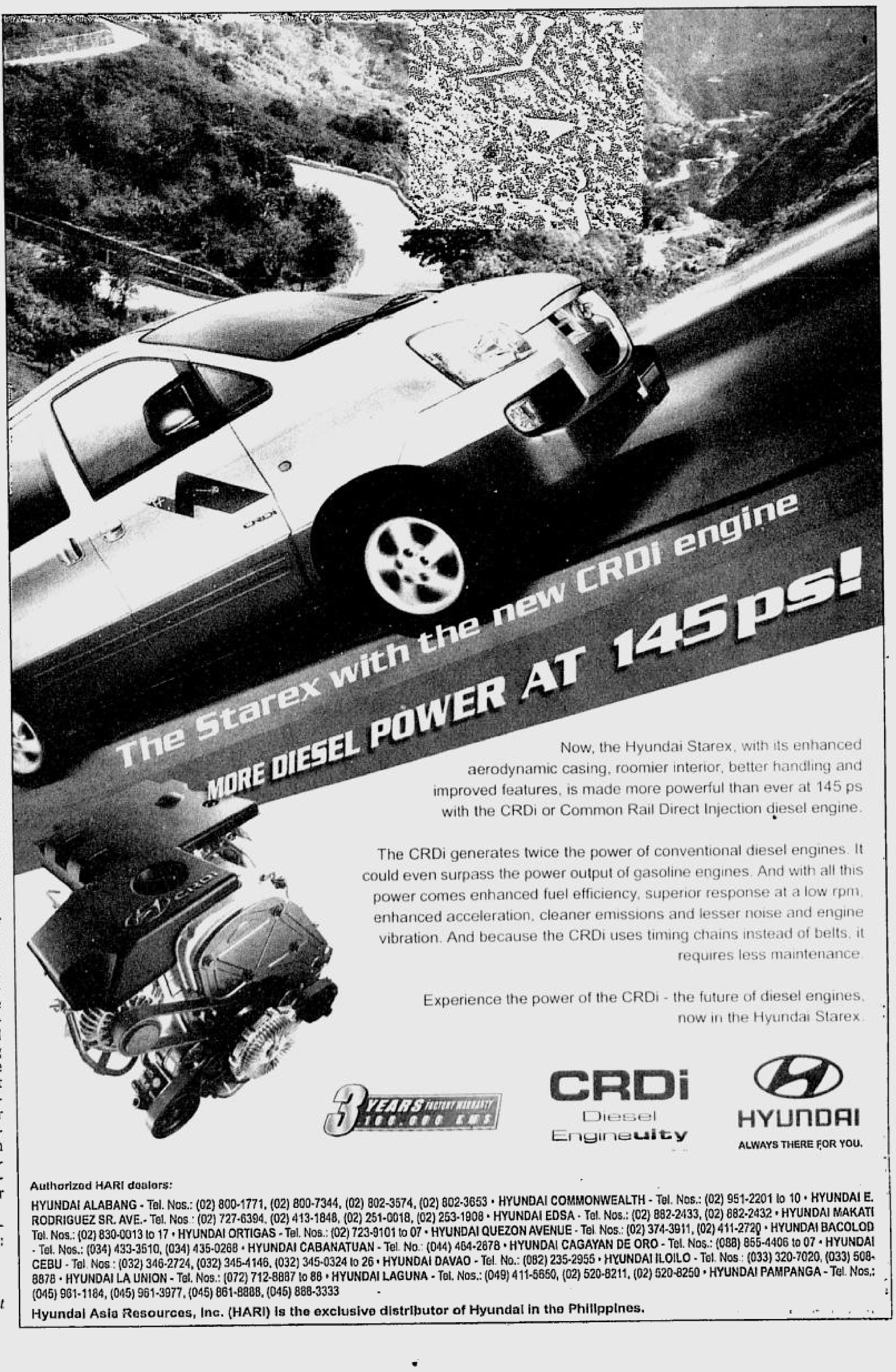
The image of a carbon fiber lawnmower, aerodynamically designed, with a light wheel/wide tire combination, and a Scud missile for a power plant jokingly comes to mind as the best solution for record-breaking acceleration and top end runs. This, amazingly, is not far from the truth as land speed record breakers and jet-powered drag cars run some sort of variation of this rocket-powered household implement theory.

In our real world though, could you imagine taking the Edsa-Ortigas Avenue flyover in one of these lawnmowers, at speed? Impossible and very likely lethal would be a realistic result. Achieving speed in a straight line is one thing, but turning a vehicle at speed, safely and quickly, is another subject matter altogether and is probably worth several volumes of encyclopedic instruction and explanation from professionals; and not the realm of an enthusiast and his 4,000 character weekly commentary.

(Definitions of units of measurement taken from: www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units. Go Tarheels!)

* * *

E-mail the author at monz00n@yahoo.com.



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Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI) is the exclusive distributor of Hyundai in the Philippines.

Igniting the electric scooter mania in RP

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

IT WOULD seem unusual for the country's exclusive distributor of big and brawny Hummer vehicles to also sell light and nimble electric-powered two wheelers.

Says Benedict Go, president of Hummer Philippines which also distributes SmartEbikes brand of electric-powered vehicles: "I love the thrill of driving high-performance off-roaders like the H1, but I also enjoy the ease and freedom of cruising along on a quiet 20-kph electric two wheeler. These transports are practical around town, and they meet the range expectations of today's riders using affordable lead-acid batteries. With an already included cargo box in some models, people can do almost any errand."

Go is probably right: electric two wheelers are cheap yet effective transportation, and the planet's air is begging for the pollution advantages they provide.

"With the rising price of fuel, transport fare and everything else, an electric-powered bike can be an excellent alternative when one is just going to travel a fairly short distance or go around town to run errands," he adds.

THE LITTLE Bigbike is for all ages and sizes.

What-if concept

Just like the Hummers when they were first introduced a few years ago, the SmartEbikes began as a "what-if" concept a few months ago.

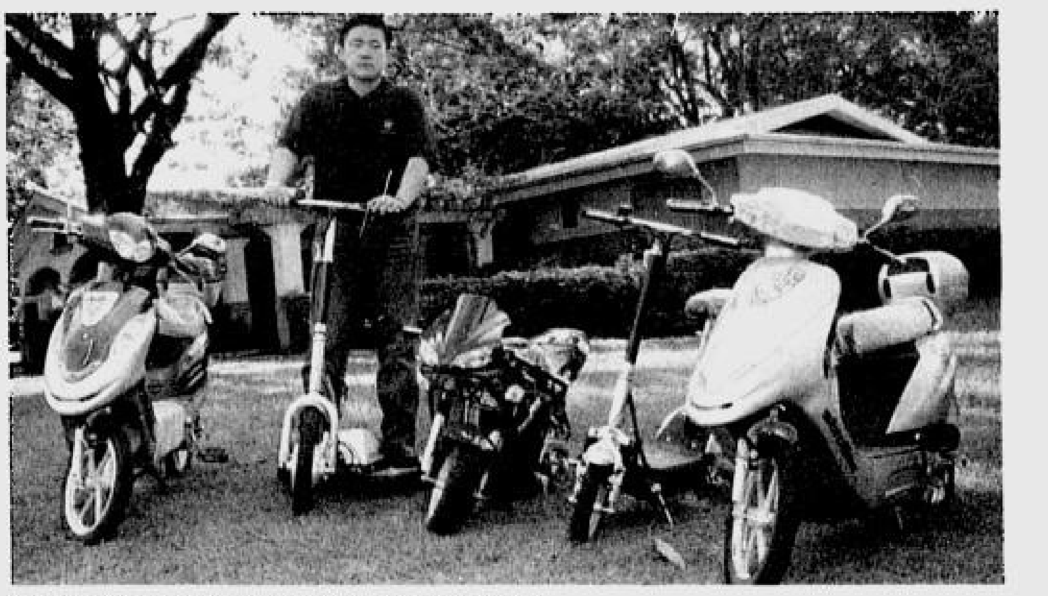
"I'm not yet sure how the market would accept electric two wheelers so I initially offered the first few units I brought from China to my very close friends. When they were all sold out in just a short time—and almost ran out of sample units of each mode—that gave me a pretty good idea how the SmartEbikes would be welcomed here," he relates.

The price is probably what attracted Go's initial buyers to SmartEbikes. Priced at P22,000 (Torqbike), P26,000 (Scootbike), P32,000 (Strollerbike, Travelerbike and Commuterbike) and P36,000 (Bigbike), the six models available in the Philippines are surely within reach of their own market.

Just plug them up

"One only needs to plug them up to any standard electric socket (220 volts) and wait four to six hours for the battery to get fully charged," reveals Go.

The six models available in the country could be classified into two groups.



GO and his fleet of environment-friendly vehicles

The Strollerbike, Travelerbike and Commuterbike models are the all-around two wheelers that comes with a utility box at the back and even a foot pedal just in case the battery runs out.

The three models can attain a speed of 20 kph and can go 35 km (25 km for the Commuterbike) in between charging.

The other group is made up of the more fun models of SmartEbikes—the Scootbike, Torqbike and Bigbike.

The 400-watt Scootbike and the 250-watt Torqbike (that looks like a three-wheeled Segway) can attain a speed of 20 kph and can go 25 km in between charging.

The top-of-the-line Bigbike, on the other hand, resembles a miniature Ducati and runs fastest of the six. Attaining a top speed of 35 kph, the Bigbike can cover 25 km in between charging.

Most fun and convenient

Electric two wheelers are known to be one of the most fun and convenient vehicles in the motor scooter industry.

"Because of their size, these scooters are wickedly maneuverable," says one of the media people invited to test drive the six models at the Mimosa Leisure Estate in Clark Field, Pampanga.

"In other countries, these electric scooters are showing up in airports, as businessmen dash from one gate to the next, on city streets, suburban teen hangouts and office complexes with tediously long corridors," reveals motoring scribe Dino Directo.

Also, just like everywhere else, a driver's license is not required to operate these two-wheelers.

Environmental impact

Besides their fun factor and convenience, the minimal environmental impact of these electric two-wheelers makes them appealing.

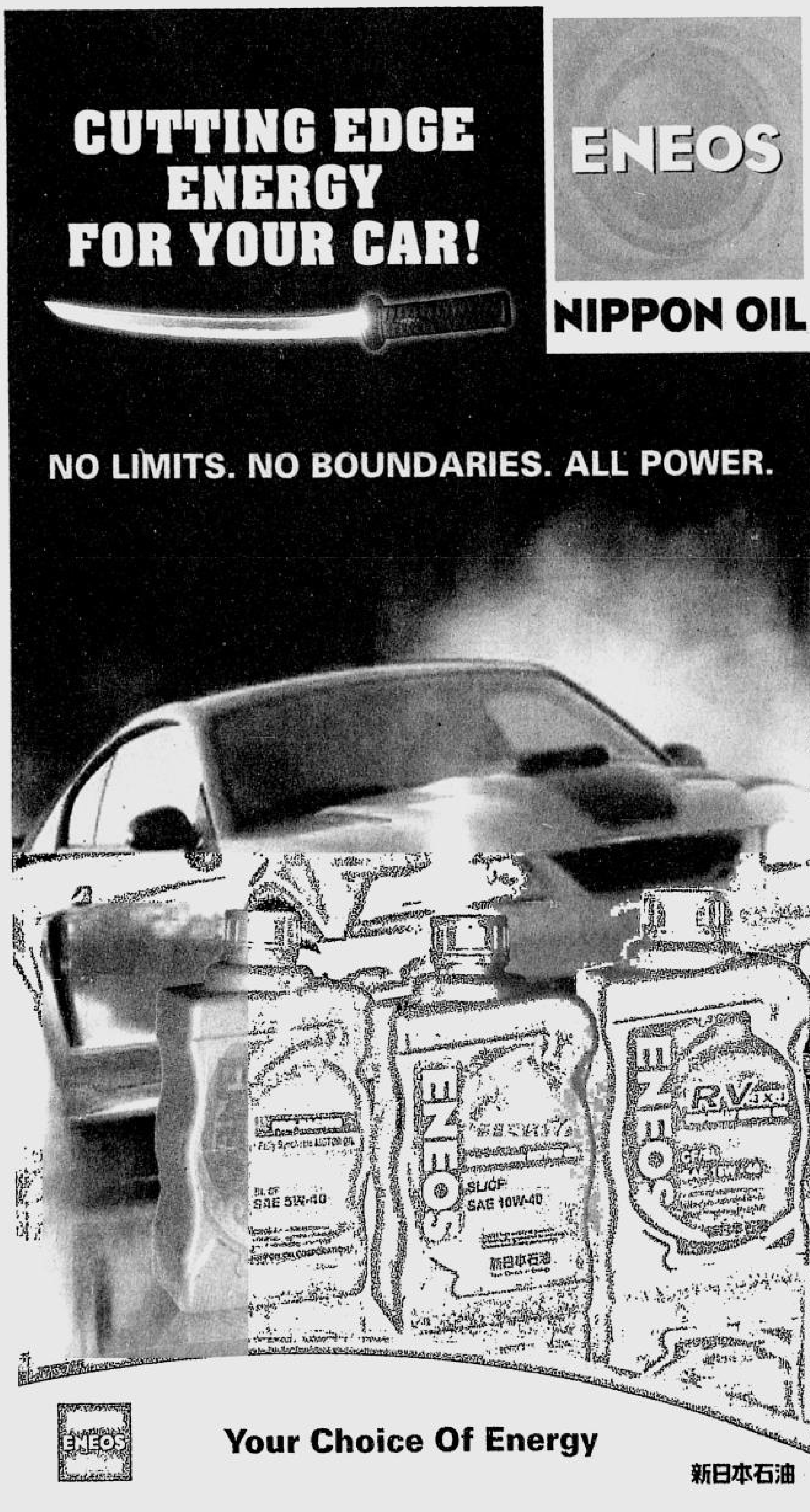
"The SmartEbikes are powered by electricity and have no pollutants," says Go.

He adds that while gasoline-fueled scooters can go faster, the fact that electric-powered two wheelers are slower would debunk the theory that his products are dangerous.

Says Go: "They go at a speed that is just right. With the owners learning the fundamentals of battery care and how not to abuse the motor and controller, I guess electric two wheelers will continue to gain popularity, especially if fuel prices keep rising.

And even though the Philippines is a "car country," Go is hopeful alternative transportation will take hold.

"I think the 21st century is going to be the age of the electric two-wheelers," he stresses.



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NLEX opening eagerly awaited; Toyota award

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE AIR is now wafting with Christmas carols. The Birth is just around the corner, so to speak. By the time it comes, it is hoped that the new North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) is fully operational. Meaning, the best expressway this side of the globe is finally totally opened.

As early as October, Ping de Jesus, the heart and soul of the expansion project of the NLEX, had said the gateway to the north was 92 percent done. That was two months ago. Our workers are now known worldwide as the most efficient that's why they're very much in demand in many countries.

With maybe only a little kink here and a little crease there, there wouldn't be much bother anymore for all of us motorists using the NLEX as we drive to the home of our youth where we will celebrate the apex of the season in the company of our loved ones—our roots—in the country. There is no better way to share the joy of the Birth of our Savior but to be with the closest relatives, renewing ties, reliving only the good memories, forgiving and forgetting whatever mistakes, sins, that came during the year. If the healing process should begin, it must be now.

* * *

Here's a little background on how the rehabilitation of the NLEX came about.

Built in the '60s, the NLEX never really tasted serious repairs for nearly three decades. With its pavement marked by potholes, lanes becoming too narrow and, therefore, unable to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of vehicles that use it every day, there became a need to rehabilitate it immediately.

Thus was born the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), which is now spearheading the much-needed facelift of the NLEX.

The urgency of rehabilitation became evident when traffic forecast studies indicated that without improvements, the projected 2015 traffic would bring average travel speeds (nonpeak hours, mind you) to as slow as 16 kilometers per hour, a condition often experienced now along sections of the congested McArthur Highway.

With government having insufficient resources to finance such a massive development, the Luzon Group, through its MNTC, took on the challenge and ventured into road infrastructure to improve and update the NLEX.

The NLEX project was a result of a contract entered into by the Philippine government through the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) and the First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPIDC). PNCC, under its franchise, is allowed to enter into joint-venture schemes and to choose its partners in such arrangements without the need for public bidding.

The resulting joint venture created the MNTC which became the main franchise holder of the NLEX for the next 30 years. To make sure the project would be world class, MNTC invited experienced partners which include FPIDC, the leading infrastructure company in the Philippines; Egis Projects of France, the world's largest toll operator; Leighton Asia Limited of Australia, experienced civil works and toll road contractor; and, PNCC, the original operator and franchise for both the NLEX and South Luzon Expressway tollways.

The NLEX is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the country over the last 10 years. Its completion and operation will spur economic growth in over three regions and 21 provinces.

The project involved the rehabilitation, expansion and modernization of the 84-km NLEX. It includes upgrading the existing 295 lane \kilometers from Balintawak to Sta. Ines and constructing an additional 138-lane kilometers from Balintawak to Sta. Rita, Bulacan, for a total of 433-lane kilometers.

All the existing 91 toll booths were demolished and 145 new toll booths constructed in their place. At the same time, four toll plazas were constructed and expanded in Balintawak, Bocaue, Tabang and Dau while 26 permanent exits have been widened. In addition, two new flyovers in Novaliches and Dau were added to ease traffic.

Even before its total completion, I've been enjoying the comfort of a rehabilitated, expanded and modernized NLEX for months as I go home to my province (Pangasinan) very often now. I doff my hat to the men and women behind the project, which is indeed long overdue.

But as I keep saying here, late is never late. Everything done for the good of the many is never late.

* * *

I've kept quiet all this time about this thing called Car of the Year Awards. I don't know. In the beginning, I just feel I need not comment on it.

But then, many readers kept asking me if I am a member of the group of motoring journalists that will select shortly (they will announce the winner in February?) the Car of the Year. When they learned I am not, the common reaction was: How come?

Now come to think of it. Why, indeed, am I not a member?

Well, for the record, I was never informed about its existence, much less invited by the founders to join the Car Awards Group (CAG). I don't know why.

But I don't mind. I won't take it against them. They have their own reasons, and it is best that they keep it to themselves. Good luck to them. I wish them success.

No, there's no truth to the rumor that I am in the midst of putting up the Car Omnipotent Group (COG), with Vernon B. Sarne of The Manila Times as my secretary general. Not at the moment. Also not true that if and when the COG gets to be erected, it will discriminate against impotents. I hope I made myself clear, dolls and fellers?

On another plane, why was Toyota not part of the CAG's project? Is it true Toyota refused to join?

Well, if true, I couldn't blame Toyota. As Vernon said, "Toyota does not need awards."

The name Toyota alone is already a badge of distinction. Not only here but worldwide.

* * *

QUOTE ME. The shopping rush is here. Just be cool. All drivers around you have gone berserk.

The 'perfect' Escape

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE FIRST time I drove an Escape two years ago, it was a 2.0-liter, 4-cylinder, DOHC, 16-valve XLT with automatic transmission (AT) on the coastal road from Cebu City to the Alegre Beach Resort in Sogod for the Ford Escape Media Ride & Drive. I then shared the impression of some motoring journalists that the 130-horsepower 2.0-liter Escape AT was a bit underpowered for its' curb weight (3,019 lb) and that the manual transmission (MT) model delivered more punch.

Ford Group Philippines responded in 2003 by releasing to the local market the more powerful 3.0-liter, DOHC, 24-valve, 4x4, 206-hp, V6 Escape AT that it had been manufacturing in its Sta. Rosa, Laguna plant all along and exporting to other Asean countries. It turns out that in the United States and other countries, the 2.0-liter XLS variant was being sold with 5-speed MT and 4x2 system only, as the basic, low-budget Escape.

The 3.0L V6 Escape does pack an exhilirating amount of power, but it also guzzles a lot of gasoline. With oil prices endlessly fluctuating, more often upward than down, the search for the "perfect" Escape continued for fuel-economy-conscious consumers.

Perfect

Finally this year, Ford Phils. came out with an Escape variant equipped with the Duratec 2.3-liter, 4-cylinder engine that also powers the Mazda6 sedan and the Escape's twin, the Mazda Tribute 2.3L. Producing max 157 brake horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 203 Newton meters max torque at 4,500 rpm, the 2.3L version can be described as the "perfect" Escape for those who desire an improved power-to-weight ratio but not the fuel requirements of a thirsty 3.0-liter V6 engine.

The Duratec engine of the 2.3L Escape weighs 18 kg lighter than the Zetec engine of the 2.0-liter basic (which, by the way, is no longer sold here) because it has an aluminum cylinder block instead of a cast iron one. The alloy wheels and tires are still 215/70R16. But surprisingly enough for a motor vehicle with a P1,080,000 price tag, the 2.3 Escape has rear drum brakes.

Control-Trac II

As in the other 4x4 Escape variants, the 2.3I's 4-wheel-drive system is Ford's trademark Control-Trac II which, when set on "4x4 Auto," transfers more power to the rear wheels as the need arises, like in slippery road conditions. When necessary or for light off-roading, the center differential can be locked to maintain a 50/50 torque split. Being a car-based small SUV, the Escape has no low-range gearing for extreme off-roading and is naturally more fuel-efficient when running most of the time in 2-wheel drive.

Compared to the Honda CR-V and the Nissan X-Trail, the Escape's overall length is less, but it is wider, thereby allowing the presence of a voluminous console box between the front seats that can store two dozen CDs. Plus large cupholders in front. A lockable glove box, large map pockets on the front doors and open storage bins on both sides of the cargo area can accommodate more things and stuff. Ford claims, with reason, that the Escape's cabin offers best-in-class spaciousness. For two rear-seat passengers, there is the convenience of foldable seatback trays with cupholders and a center armrest. The Escape is touted to comfortably seat five including driver, but four is a more realistic number.

Space

When the rear seat is folded flat forward and the head restraints removed, cargo space is increased to 935 liters. The glass window of the back door can be flipped up, giving you the convenience of dropping grocery bags in without having to lift up the whole door. A stretchable canvas-like lid to cover the cargo area is available to keep your things safe from the prying eyes of passersby when the vehicle is parked.

In other words, the exterior and interior of the 2.3L Escape are essentially the same as the phased-out, unlamented 2.0-liter and the top-of-the-line 3.0L V6 variants'. Because the Escape since its intro in 2002 has always offered nimble handling, strong brakes, a comfortable ride, a roomy cabin and adequate safety equipment (two airbags, ABS with EBD, side-impact beams, pretensioner seatbelts in front, burglar alarm and keyless entry), Ford only really needed to address the performance issue, at the same time keeping fuel efficiency in mind, to come up with the perfect Escape.

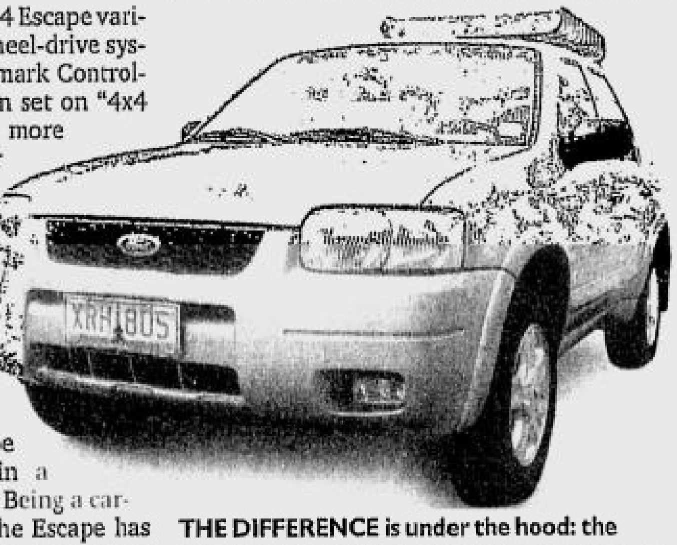
COTY-P UPDATE: A silver 2-door Mercedes-Benz SLK 350 roadster with electronically retractable hardtop arrived for the final testfest of the 2004 Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) at Eagle Ridge, Cavite last weekend. The SLK 350 was accompanied by two MB sedans: a C240 and an E240. The last testfest was held for entries that did not show up previously because of scheduling conflicts. Thus we welcomed a 3.0L V6 Toyota Camry from Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., a Peugeot 307 from Auto France Philippines and a Nissan Patrol from Universal Motors Corp. Many thanks and plaudits to Automobile Association Philippines and all the car manufacturers who cooperated with Coty-P 2004 and thereby identified with its goal to give recognition to progress in the car industry.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A man in love is incomplete until he has married. Then he's finished. (Zsa Zsa Gabor)

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)



THE DIFFERENCE is under the hood: the 2.3L Escape looks just like the 3.0L V6 variant and the phased-out 2.0 liter XLT.

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Do it yourself!

Let's face it. As a generation, we're pretty spoiled. We are dependent on our parents, we rely on our 'yayas' for a lot of things, we don't even do our own nails. We figured that it's about time we got off the couch and start doing things ourselves

IN THIS ISSUE, we help you jump-start a new, more independent you. We encouraged celebrities and designers to channel their inner artists and show you how a dose of beading, a little glitter and lots of imagination can transform simple fashion pieces into works of art. [And yes, we're raffling off their creations.]

We asked experts to give us tips on putting on your own makeup, styling your own hair and taking charge of your room's interiors.

Some of your favorite restaurants shared their secrets on how to recreate your yummy favorites at home—for those days when money is running out or when you want to impress your friends.

Because the best way to have things done our way is to do those things ourselves.

Go ahead, DIY!

DIY FASHION

Art attack

How to jazz up plain fashion pieces—according to some of your favorite personalities

By Pam Pastor

THERE'S an artist lurking inside everyone of us. That's what we believe.

And apparently, Havaianas, The Store With No Name, Robinsons Department Store, Converse and INQUIRER's marketing team share this belief with us.

We asked celebrities, designers and other personalities to channel their inner artists and jazz up flip flops, shirts, bags and headgear from the brands mentioned above.

Their finished projects amazed us. And on these pages, they will amaze you.

No doubt about it, these people definitely know how to DIY.

And now it's your turn. Take the cue from their examples and get started on your own designs.

TOM EPPERSON

Jenni Epperson

Creative director, INQUIRER Just Shop, TV host of Lifestyle Network's "Good Finds," ultimate shopper

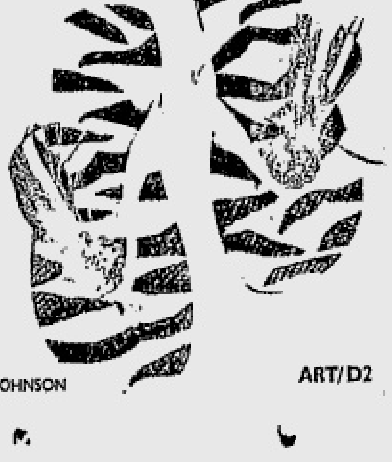
Design title: Just Shop In Style

Inspiration: Zebra print and fuchsia are two of my fave combos. I like the mix because it's quirky and stylish at the same time.

Materials used: Black enamel paint, thin paint brush, pen to outline design, feathers, applique, glue gun

Time consumed: One hour to outline design and paint. One to two days to dry paint (depends on the weather). One minute to glue applique.

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Use gloves when painting if you don't want to dirty your hands. Have cotton buds dipped into paint thinner to erase mistakes. Other than that, have fun and paint away!



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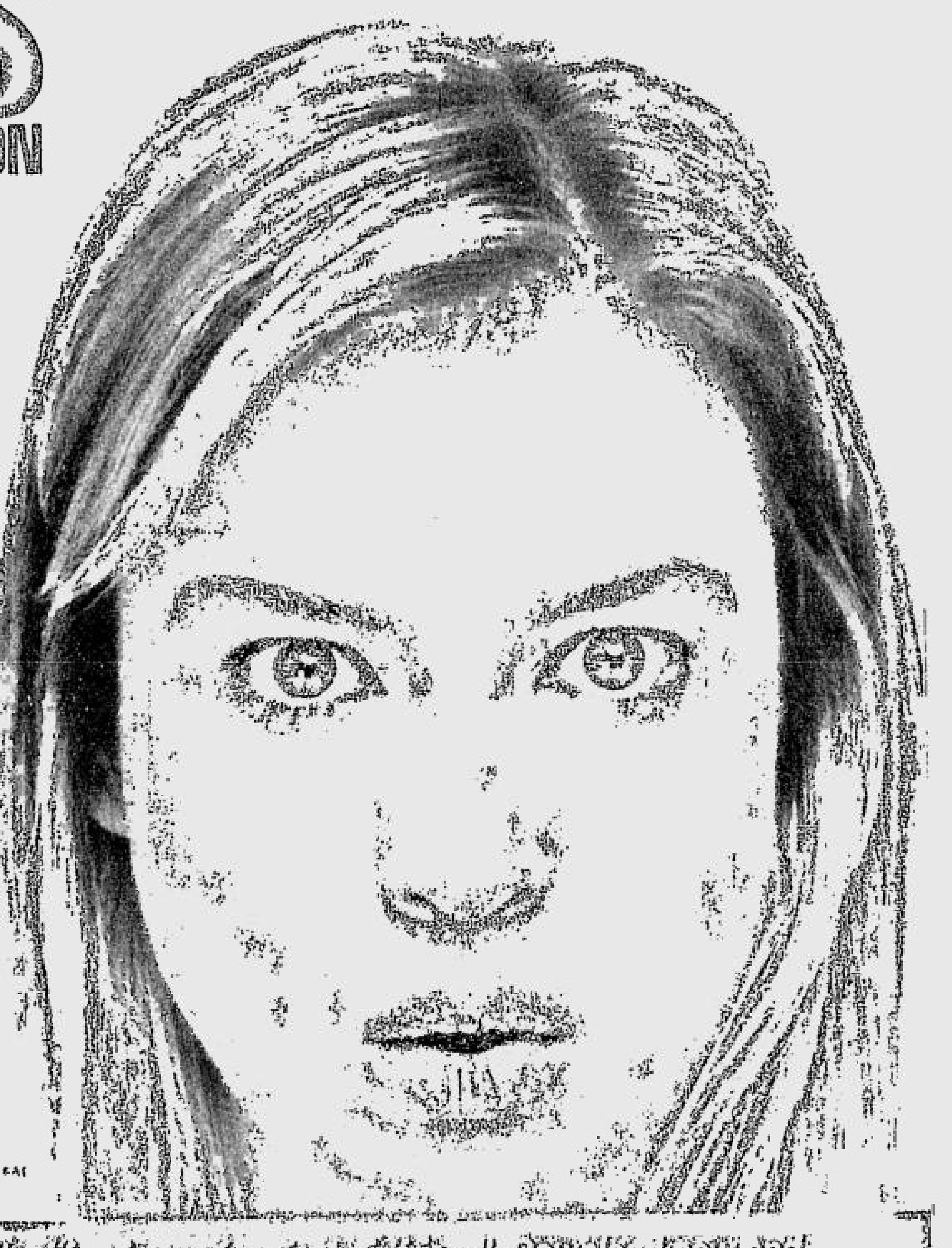

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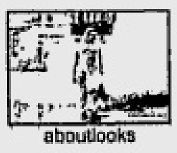

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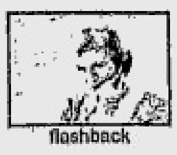

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Nobody Does It Better	Carly Simon	NobodyDoes
We'll Be Together	Sting & Annie Lenox	WellB2geder
What The World Needs Now	Dionne	WhatDWorld
Like A Virgin	Madonna	LikeVirgin
I Believe In A Thing Called Love	The Darkness	IBelieveIn
Me and Mrs. Jones	Van Morrison	MrsJones
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Woman	Nenah Cherry	Woman2
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2. Text GO <handset model> to 2051 to get your phone's settings. Ex. GO N3650 For Nokia 3220, 6220, 6230, 6260, 6600, 6820, 7200 and 7610 text GO <handset model>,, 1234 to 2051. Make sure that you type in the two commas before the 1234 PIN.
3. Enter 1234 when asked for PIN to save the settings.
4. Send an MMS message for only P5.00 to activate the service.

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A release through Solar Entertainment Corporation

MTRCB RATING: PG 13. Parents are strongly cautioned against bringing very young children below 10 yrs old. © 2004 Universal Studios. Promo Duration: Oct 30 to Dec 31 2004. Per DTI NCR Permit No. [illegible], Series of 2004

Art attack

From page D1

BETOY JOHNSON

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Interior designer, INQUIRER Lifestyle columnist, TV and events host and fashion chameleon

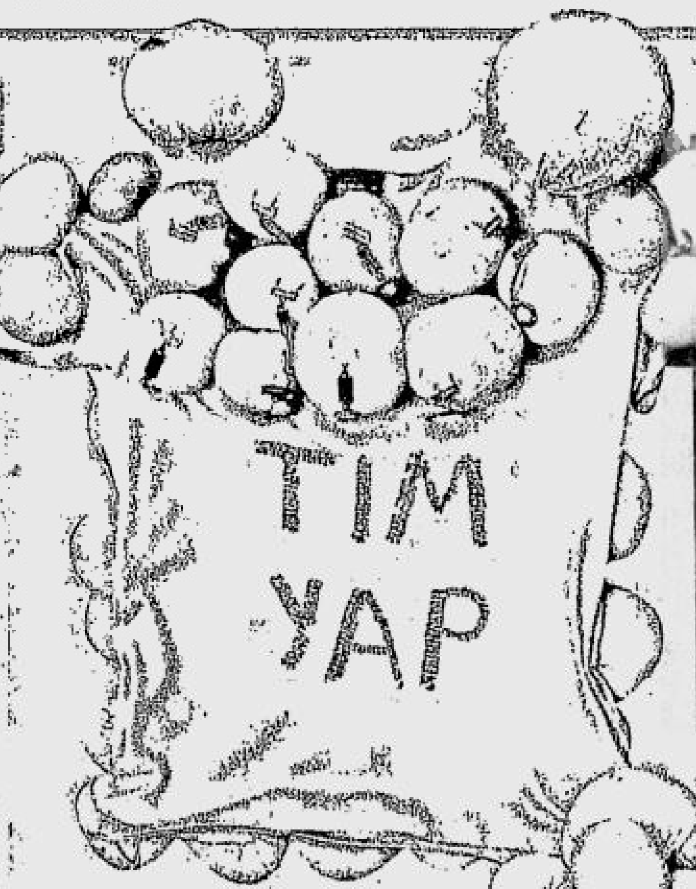
Design title: Furry and Fuzzy

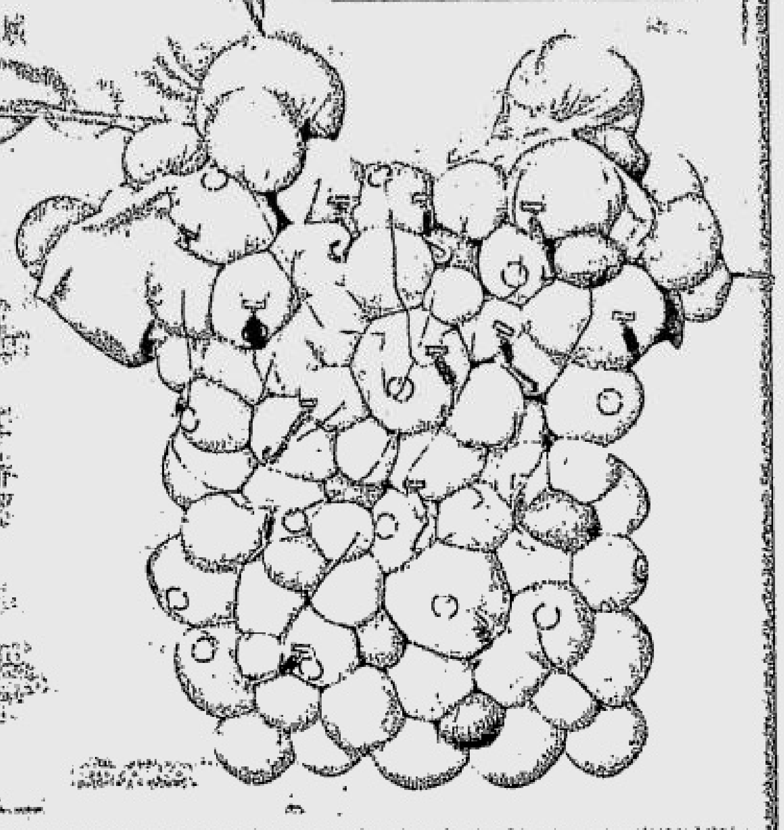
Inspiration: Found objects in the house. Just find the time to rummage through your things and you'll surely find something.

Materials used: Long boa feathery thing from Carolina's and extra beads from a necklace that got broken. For the shirt, I have a lot of flamenco flowers and since I couldn't dance anymore, I stuck them on a shirt.

Time consumed: An hour

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Recycling is the key. It's the cheapest and most affordable way to make something new out of something old.





Tim Yap

[illegible] columnist for INQUIRER 2bU!, event organizer, model, unstoppable mas[illegible]

Design title: I've Got Balls

Inspiration: [illegible]

Materials used: [illegible]

Time consumed: [illegible]

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: [illegible]

ERIC LIRIOS

Happy David

Get Happy designer, young entrepreneur, stylist, magic maker

Design title: Happy-anas

Inspiration: The beach, underwater marine life, coco lychee martinis, colors that go well with their tans! Little trinkets lying on the shore, waves crashing on your feet, curling your toes in the sand. I used the charms to simulate that effect.

The peach and white tones of the pair given me matched the 2bU! pastel color logo. It reminded me of Tyzia and Leanne, my favorite *makulit* customers, who both know how to enjoy life, balancing school, work, family, friends, and the beach while maintaining that laidback style attitude!

Materials used: Chain extenders to act as base for the charms, sewing needle, thread and nylon to attach chain on thong and sew laminate on sequin patch, ice pick or any other sharp tool to puncture thong, lit candle to burn off ends of knots, seed, glass, acrylic, Czech beads and Swarovski crystals, metal charms, 2bU! laminate with drilled holes, flower sequined patch, head pins, jump rings, metal spacers and pliers

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design:

Keep in mind that the possibilities are endless. Create a look in your mind. Gather the materials that you like, try to find a common theme, plan and eliminate the items that do not contribute to the whole scheme you want to come up with. Remember there will always be another slipper to embellish and unleash those numerous ideas on. Don't vent it all out in one project. It may come out confused in the end.

Always keep comfort in mind. I always had to fit the slipper from time to time in-between embellishments to make sure my work did not make irritable contact on my feet. The first knot I did kept rubbing against my foot because it was on the lower part of the thong.

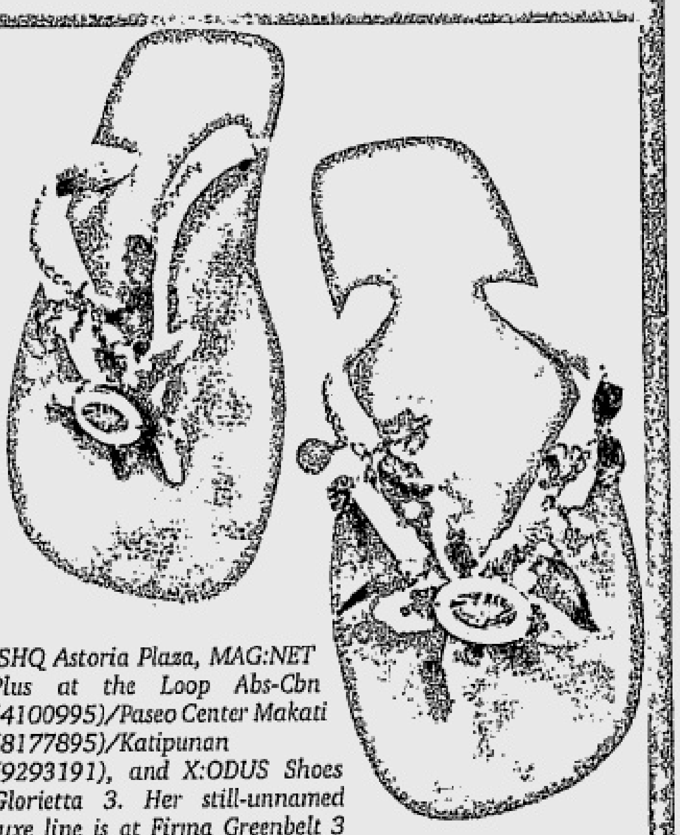
You may also use colored thread/string and knot it nicely on top so that it will be easy to untie it again and change charms. And it will also act as part of the embellishment. Don't work on the thong directly right away so as not to damage it if you keep changing your mind. Also, unless you want to get stuck with that design forever, use a detachable base like the chain extenders so you can change it from time to time and won't have a hard time embellishing the slipper.

Have a critic or friend around who can give advice or check on the theme you're working on. She can also help by holding the slipper while you're trying to puncture the thong or burning off nylon ends.

Scour your local lace shop, mom's or *lola*'s odds and ends for things that can add a unique charm to your project.

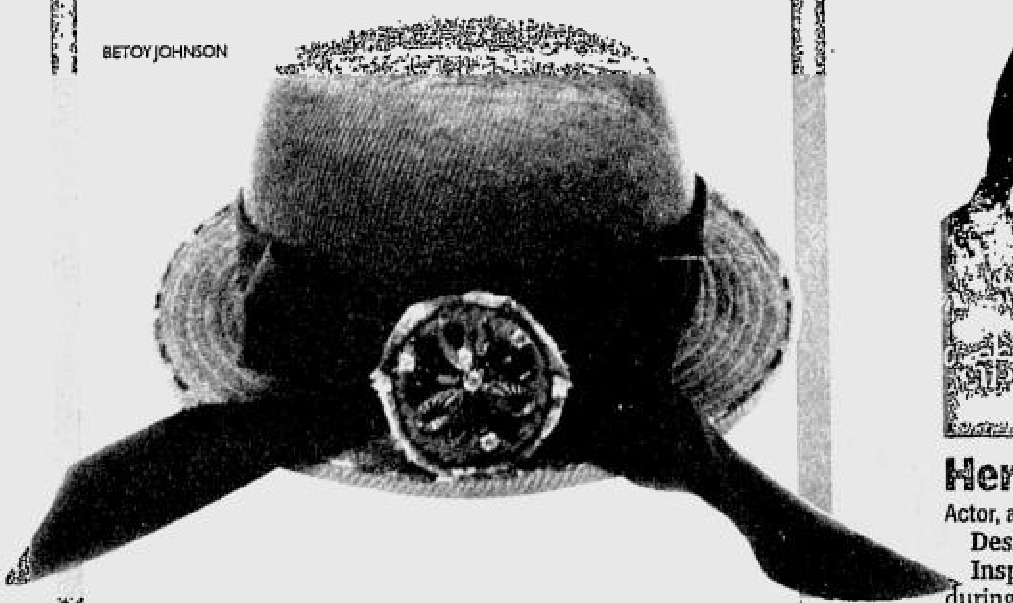
Enjoy and have fun! For those who need help with the design, watch out for DIY kits in local craft stores like Stitches N Things (6341734) that have prepared beads for a specific design already planned out.

Get Happy Accessories are available at U Rustan's Makati (8133739) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5512788), XOXO Rustan's Tower Shangri-La, The Store With No Name at Robinsons Galleria (6331771), SHUBIZZ at the Shops Greenhills/Market Market, ISHQ Astoria Plaza, MAG:NET Plus at the Loop Abs-Cbn (4100995)/Paseo Center Makati (8177895)/Katipunan (9293191), and X:ODUS Shoes Glorietta 3. Her still-unnamed luxe line is at Firma Greenbelt 3 (7574009) and House of Laurel (8975063).



BETOY JOHNSON

BETOY JOHNSON



Rajo Laurel

Fashion designer, creative genius

Design title: Freaked Fedora

Inspiration: The jazz age! Marlene Dietrich if she was alive today

Materials used: Velvet ribbon, scrap materials, crystals with beadwork

Time consumed: Three hours!

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Look around your house for interesting pieces of fabric—old blouses or skirts—then chop them up to bring life to new pieces.

AMY MOSURA

Hero Angeles

Actor, aspiring artist, successful survivor

Design title: Fire

Inspiration: My fans, because I worked on the hat during one of the stops of Hero's Day in Butuan last week

Materials used: Acrylic paint

Time consumed: 30 minutes

Tips for readers who want to duplicate your design: Use your imagination. I created a flame design to express passion and creativity.

Hero Angeles appears courtesy of BNY. See Hero at his National Hero's Day on Dec. 5, at Market! Market! in Global City, The Fort, Taguig..

BETOY JOHNSON

BETOY JOHNSON

Assunta de Rossi

Actress, statuesque beauty

Design title: Glam

Inspiration: I wanted to design something that would really stand out. What I came up with is perfect for matching with a plain black outfit. It will really make a statement.

Materials used: Glitter glue in different colors.

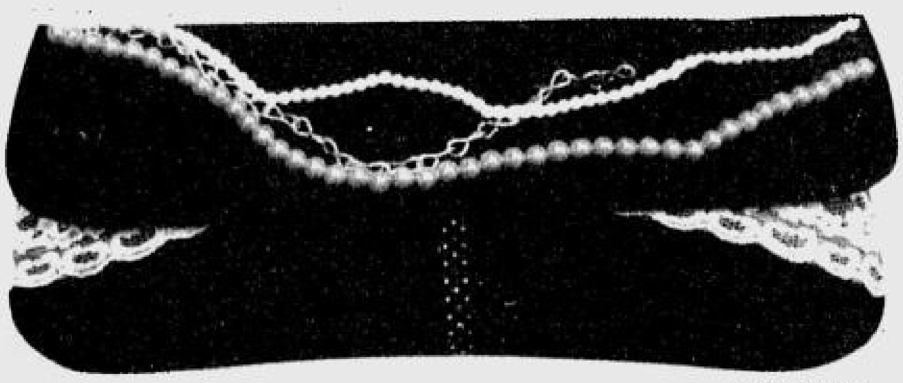
Time consumed: Two days

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Designing the bag with glitter glue was very easy. However, the glue wasn't drying that quickly, so I turned on my electric fan and put the bag in front to let it dry overnight. If you don't use a fan, it will take you days.

FLIP FLOPS: HAVAIANAS
SHIRTS AND BAGS:
THE STORE WITH NO NAME
HEADGEAR:
ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE

Art attack

From page D



BETOY JOHNSON

Bianca Gonzales

Model, actress, style setter

Design title: Bianca!

Inspiration: My fashion sense now, both rugged and girly!

Materials used: Pearls, lace, chains, black thread, super adhesive

Time consumed: Shopping for materials, around 30 minutes. Making it, around four hours—with lots of breaks!

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Express yourself, be patient and have fun!

Rico Robles

Radio DJ, registered nurse, rapper, producer, frustrated boxer, poet and an architect for change

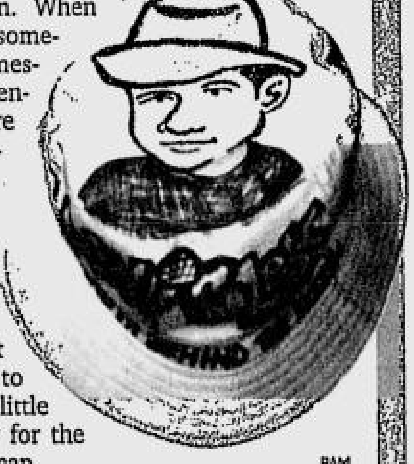
Design title: The Truth Behind the Booth

Inspiration: Being in the entertainment field, we are all surrounded with cliches, trends and bubblegum. When 2bU! asked me to design something, I wanted it to carry a message that not everyone in entertainment and media are all sellouts. Being in this industry has given me an opportunity to reach a wider level of people in all social classes, and it has been my goal ever since to break social lines and stop crab mentality, and music is just my medium. I wanted that to show in my design, with a little help from my boy Stanley for the caricature on the top of the cap.

Materials used: An old black marker, purple tech pen and an architect's mind.

Time consumed: 22 years (thinking), 15 minutes (sketching and coloring)

Tips for readers: Never give up, and if you believe in it, it will happen, keep on dreaming—because it's free.



PAM PASTOR

Louis Claparols

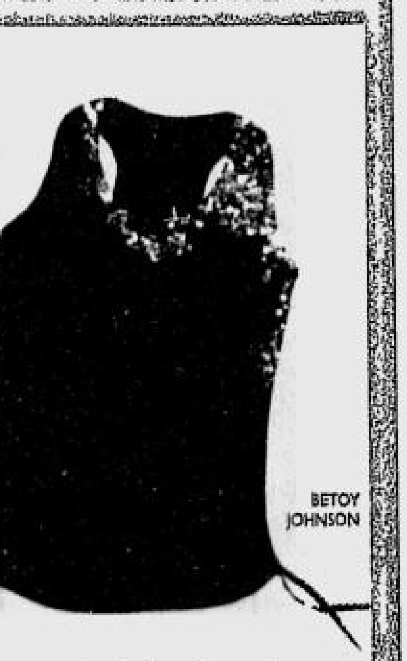
Fashion designer, king of embellishment

Design title: The Wall Flower

Materials used: Flat and cup sequins in different sizes and colors

Inspiration: Graphic works of Peter Marx

Time consumed: 5 hours



BETOY JOHNSON

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: You have to have a lot of patience. Beadwork isn't an easy task, it requires a lot of time and effort, especially if your goal is to make your piece look intricate and interesting.

ART/D4

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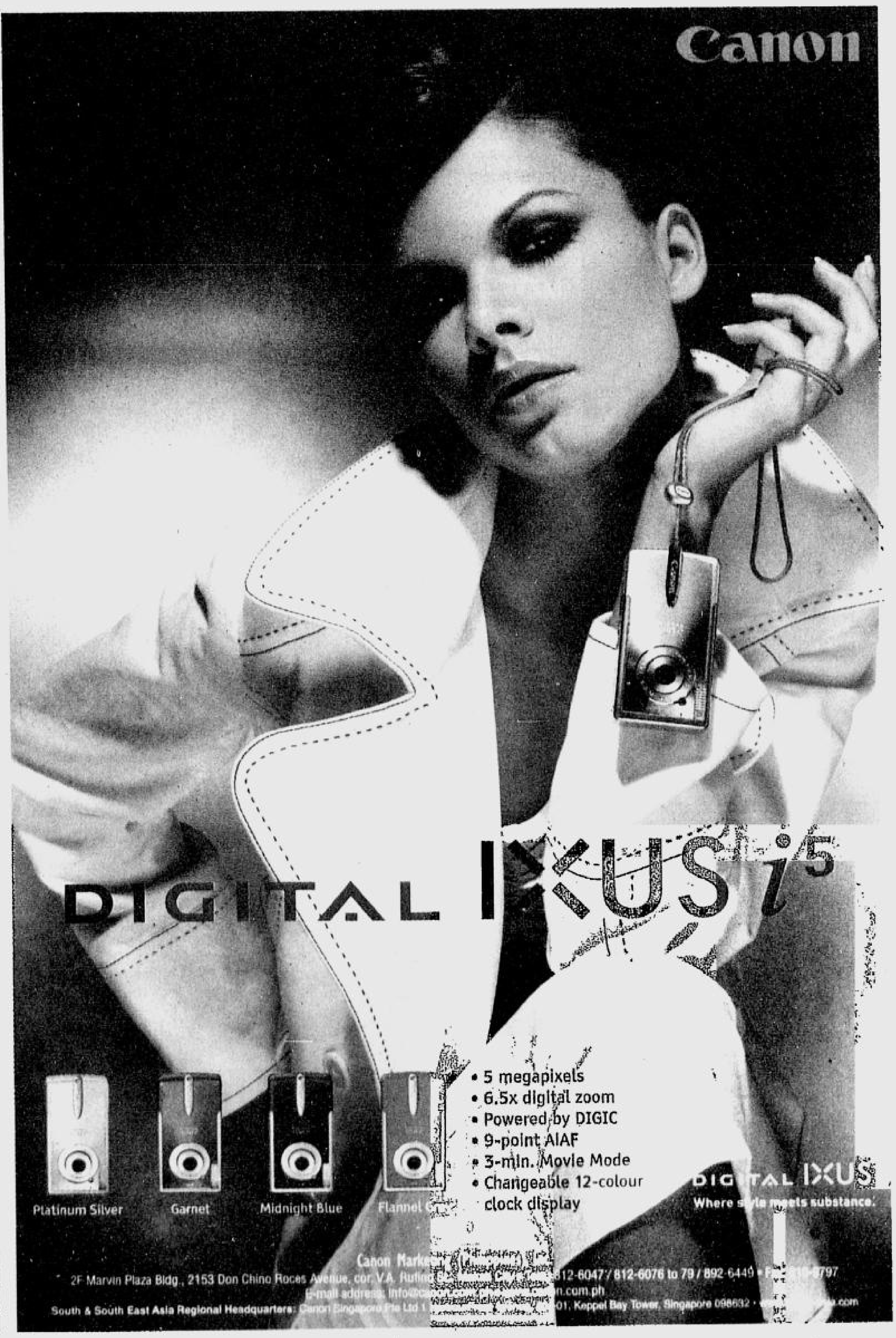

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Art attack

from page D1

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

CJ de Silva

Artist, Promil kid, child prodigy

Design title: Pinoy Pop Delight

Inspiration: When I first saw the pair of flip flops, I really didn't know what to do with it. First thing that popped into my mind was sunset, since I always loved it. But I thought it's usual already. So, again, just like with my Chucks, my patriotism drove me to another cool design. I thought, why not a Filipino delight? Since I was craving for something sweet that afternoon, I thought of ice cream. Voila! Patriotism + ice cream craving = the Filipino dirty ice cream!

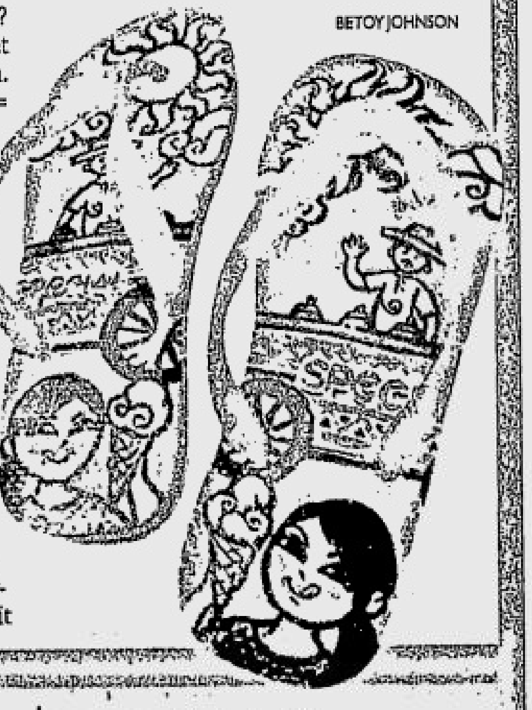
Materials used: I used acrylic paint and nylon brushes. At first I was worried that acrylic would just resist the slippers' texture. But hey, cool, the paint went on it so well. For protection, I applied a coat of acrylic emulsion (the water-based counterpart of varnish) after I finished coloring it.

Time consumed: Doing the flip flops didn't require much time. I finished it within three hours, with all the finishing touches. Although applying the emulsion was another 30 minutes.

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: Instead of exactly copying my flip flops, I think be inspired by it *na lang*. I mean, make mine as the basis or the "prototype," but come up with something truly you own. All you need is creativity, plus hard work and patience. Cool designs aren't just a spur-of-the-moment thing. They need to be well-thought, well-planned and well-executed.

Research old designs and reinvent them. Or check out new materials that could make your design look cooler and more unique.

BETOY JOHNSON



MARLON DESPUES

Kate Torralba

Fashion designer, singer, pianist, writer, eternal multi-tasker

Design title: Chichamichu

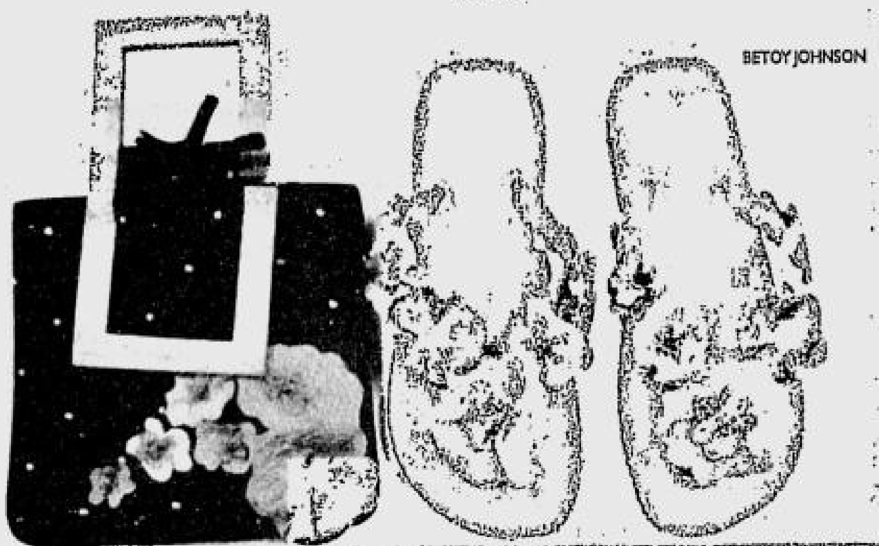
Inspiration: My new "Chicharon Bulaklak" embroidery collection

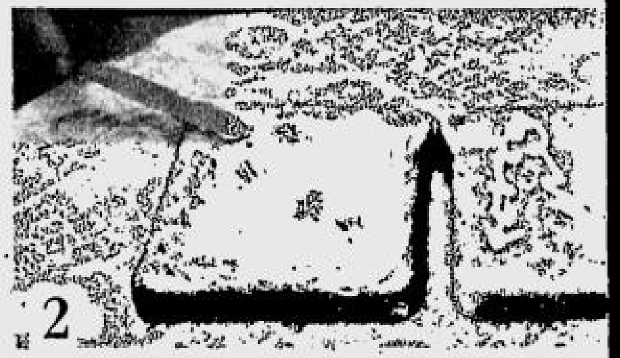
Materials used: Embroidered appliques, glass beads, needle and thread, old bag

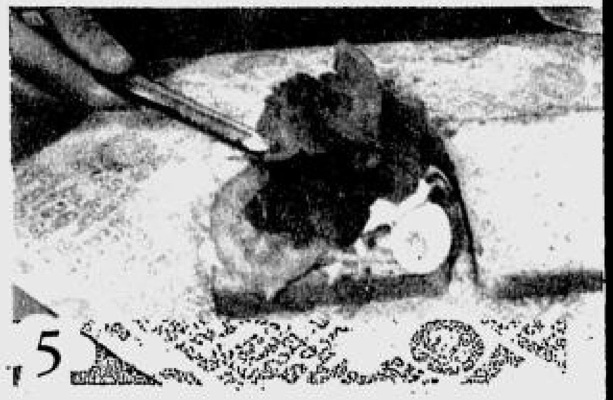
Time consumed: A little over an hour

Tips for readers who want to duplicate the design: You can go to Carolina's and choose from their wide array of applique. Interesting new details give old pieces a fresh look, like this nearly forgotten purse. And don't hesitate. There's no wrong way to personalize your stuff!

BETOY JOHNSON







DIY FOOD

Be your own c

Recreate your restaurant favorites at home

By Pam Pastor

WE'LL do anything for you, our beloved 2bU! readers.

We raided the kitchens of some of our favorite food havens and asked them to share their secrets with us so we could pass them on to you.

Clip these pages and let them be your lifesaver on days when you feel like eating out but don't have the resources, or when you want to impress friends (or even dates) who are coming over.

Here's how to make a great coffee sandwich, fondue, lemon chicken, pizza and grilled salmon—all you need to become a pseudo-chef in just a few pages.

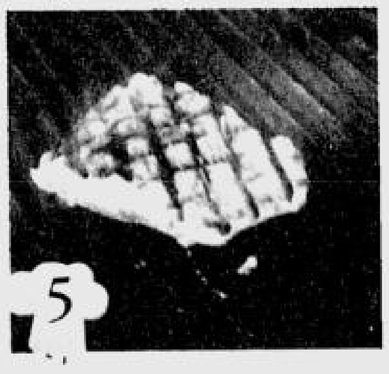
Enjoy.

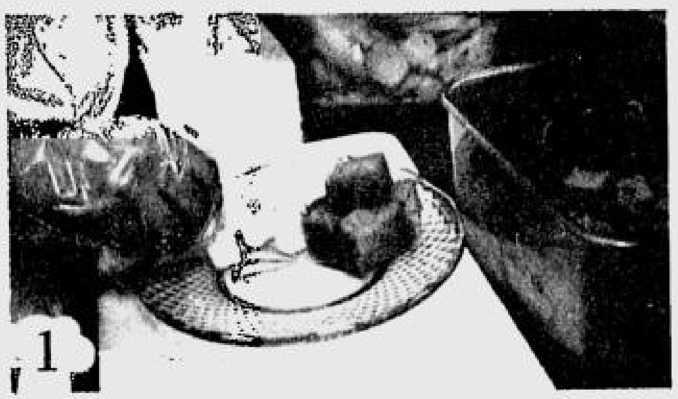
TGIFric

Grilled Salm

1. Oil both sid
2. Season bot
3. Place salm and grill for th halfway throu must be well n
4. Critical Con salmon and c again to creat perature of 63
5. Transfer the
6. Place one s your own by a ter must be m
7. Heat green skillet opposit
8. Place lemo the salmon.
9. Place a pars wedge.

T. G. I Friday's dropping by F Rembrandt Q





Max Brenner

Warm Chocolate Fondue

Fondue is a great treat to prepare for a night of bonding with friends. Max Brenner's Executive Chef Golda Ranada showed us how to make it.

1. Prepare the ganache by mixing one part chocolate with half part cream using a double boiler. (You may buy chocolate in blocks from Max Brenner's retail store—your choice of white, milk or dark, but dark is the most popular choice for fondue).
2. Arrange banana bread, lady fingers, marshmallows, bananas and strawberries prettily on a platter. (You can actually add other kinds of food for dipping—brownies, even suman and other fresh fruits. Apples are used as a substitute when strawberries are not available.)
3. Pour the ganache into fondue pots (yes, they're available from Max Brenner, too—or you can improvise with a ceramic pot and a double boiler) and serve.

PHOTOS: BETOY JOHNSON

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6

Oliver's

Designer D - Ham, Bacon, Pineapple Chutney and Creamy Egg Sandwich

The perfect sandwich is just 10 steps away.
1. Drizzle a slice of bread with mayonnaise.
2. Spread the mayonnaise.
3. Add shredded lettuce.
4. Add farmer's ham.
5. Add sliced egg.
6. Add sliced tomatoes.
7. Add salt and pepper.
8. Add pineapple chutney.
9. Add bacon.
10. Cover with the other slice of bread.

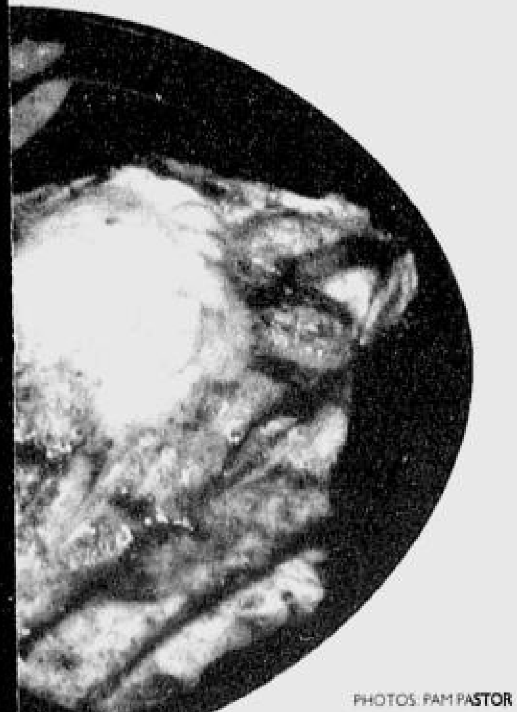
PHOTOS: BETOY JOHNSON

iay's

n
:s of thawed white salmon fillet.
ı sides with Cajun seasoning.
n fillet on a clean, medium heated section of broiler
ee to four minutes, turning the fillet 1/4 turn
h cook time to create diamond grill marks. Salmon
arked.
rol Point. Using a wide metal spatula, carefully flip
ok for an additional 3-4 minutes. Turn fillet 1/4 turn
diamond marks. Cook to a minimum internal tem-
degrees Celsius.
salmon from the grill to an iron skillet.
ce of Maison butter on top of the salmon (make
ding salt, pepper and spring onions to butter). But-
lted.
eans in microwave until hot and place in the iron
the salmon.
wedge on ramekin and place the ramekin beside

ley bouquet on the ramekin beside the lemon

celebrates 10 years. Join the celebration by riday's at Glorietta, Alabang Town Center, Hotel C, Sta. Lucia East and Robinsons Place Manila.



PHOTOS: PAM PASTOR

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Grand Draw: Dec. 14, 2004
Draw Dates:
Monthly Draw: October 22 and Nov. 22, 2004
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See posters and print ads for details.
Per DTI Permit No. 2147, series of 2004

Drop in drop boxes located at Ayala and Robinson's cinema lobbies, and all LBC and Netopia branches. You may also mail entries to: Guyito Wild Hunt, PDI Bldg., corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City.

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23:19
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1515 Series of 2004

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Super bowl

Lemon Chicken

Head Chef Allan Mesa shared with us his secret recipe for Lemon Chicken (breaded fillet of chicken with a sweet tangy lemon sauce)—the resto's signature item. Whip up this dish for dinner to impress your parents.

1. Prepare batter using two kinds of flour, oil and water.
2. Dip the chicken fillet in batter, make sure it is coated well.
3. Let it drip to make sure the batter is even.
4. Deep fry for around six minutes or until golden brown. Flip over when necessary.
5. Drain the oil.
6. Place three to four slices of lemon on a plate.
7. Pour lemon sauce (made of lime juice, lemon flavor, salt, sugar and custard powder) on top.
8. Chop chicken and arrange on a plate.
9. Garnish and serve.

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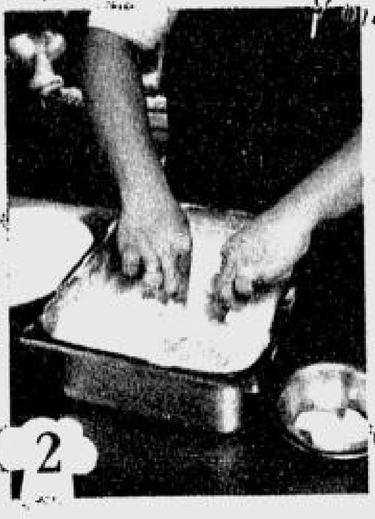
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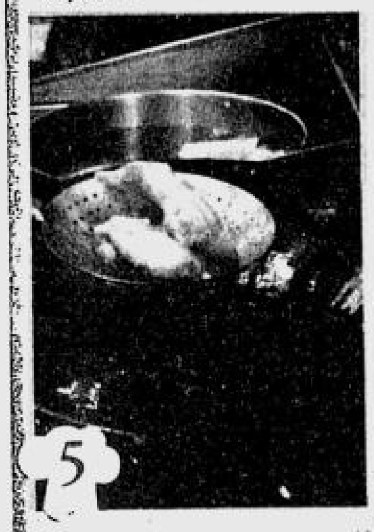
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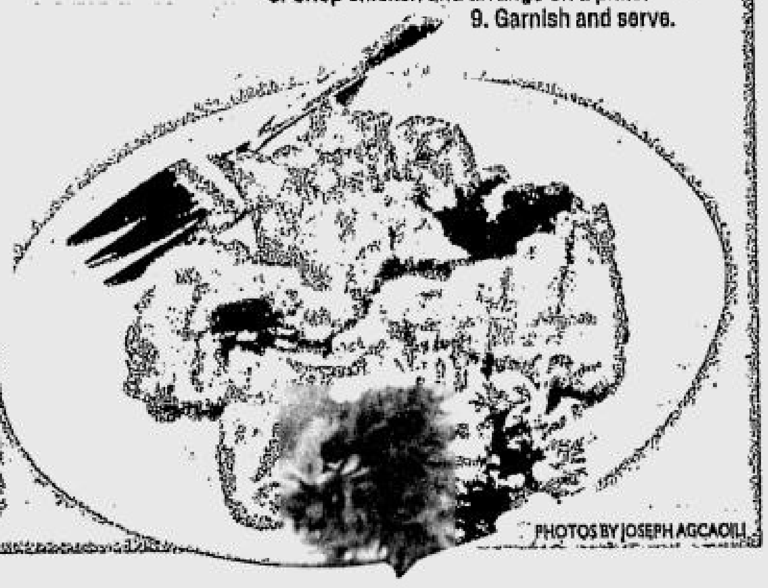

PHOTOS BY JOSEPH AGCAOILI

Shakey's

How to make two kinds of pizza for any occasion.

Pepperoni Crunch Pizza

1. Put flour on your work area to keep the dough from sticking.
2. Bring out dough (make your own or buy ready-to-made thin-crust dough from the supermarket)
3. Use the roller docker (or fork) to create holes, avoid bubbles and make sure the pizza stays thin.
4. Pour 120 g of pizza sauce in the middle.
5. Spread the pizza in clockwise motion in one direction. Make sure it's evenly spread.
6. Sprinkle 200 g of natural cheese or any cheese you want to use, leaving about half an inch from the edge free to create a cheese ring. This will ensure that the cheese stays in the crust.
7. Cover the pizza with 48 pcs of pepperoni.
8. Use a giant spatula to transfer the pizza to the oven.
9. Let the pizza bake in 450° F for about eight to 10 minutes.
10. Take the pizza out of the oven and add shoestring potatoes. (You can use Piknik or make your own.)
11. Cut the pizza evenly. Serve.

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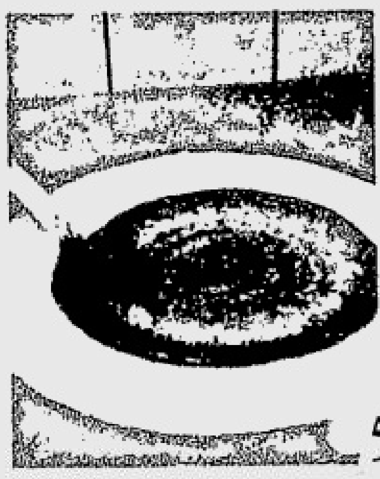

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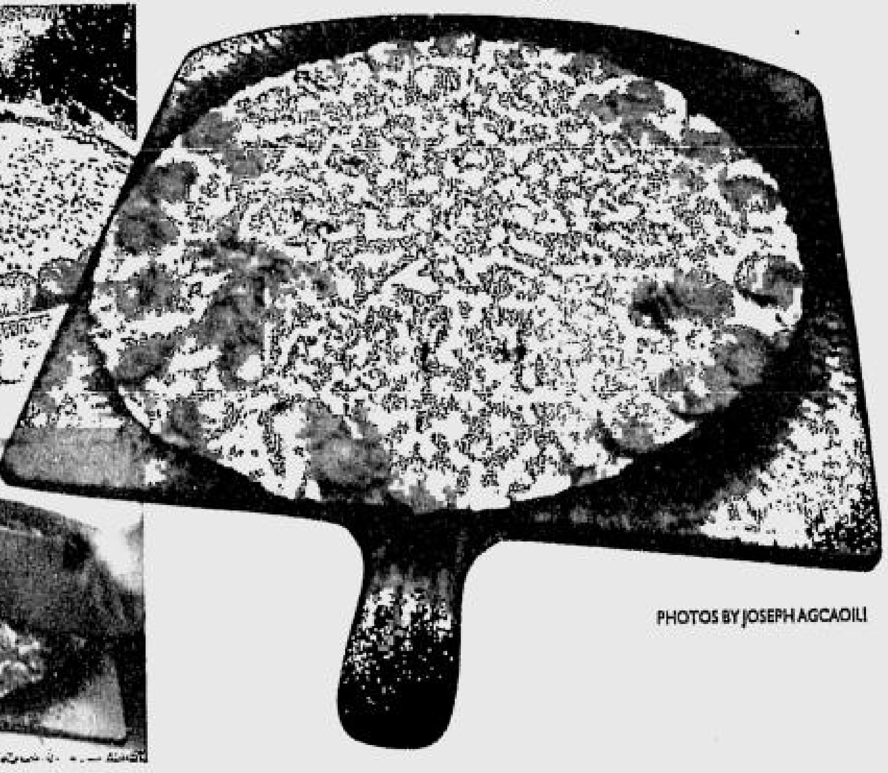

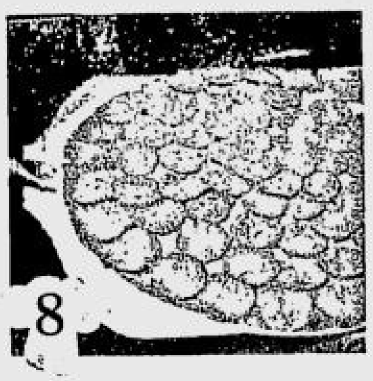
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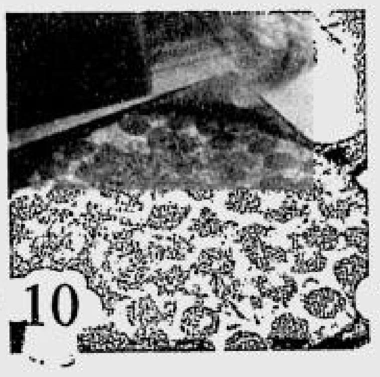
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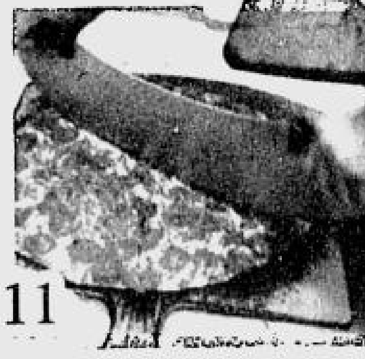
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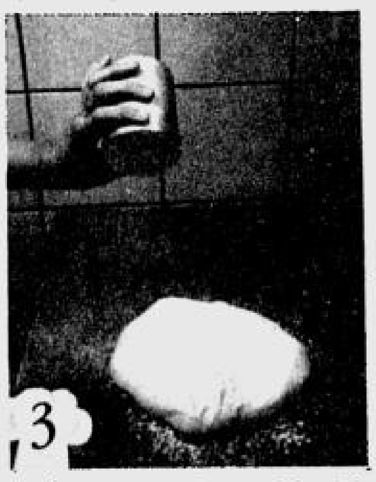
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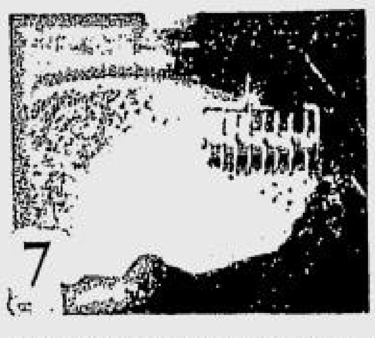
New York-Style Belly Buster

1. Put flour on your work area to keep the dough from sticking.
2. Lay dough on the table.
3. Sprinkle dough with flour.
4. Using your knuckles, knead the dough.
5. Toss the pizza.
6. Oil the pizza screen with vegetable oil (you can buy it from cooking stores). Place the dough on top of the pizza screen.
7. Use the roller docker (or a fork) to create holes and avoid bubbles.
8. Create a cheese ring with your fingers.
9. Oil the edge to create a golden brown color.
10. Pour 120 grams of pizza sauce in the middle.
11. Spread the pizza in clockwise motion in one direction. Make sure it's evenly spread.
12. Add 200 grams of mozzarella cheese.
13. Add pepperoni (15 pcs), salami (5 pcs), marinated beef (70 g), Italian sausage (30 g), ham (30 g), green pepper (35 g), red pepper (35 g), onion (35 g), mushrooms (55 g), black olives (30 g) and more mozzarella (50 g) on top.
14. Use a giant spatula to transfer the pizza to the oven.
15. Let the pizza bake in 450° F for about eight to 10 minutes.
16. Take the pizza out of the oven and cut it evenly. Serve.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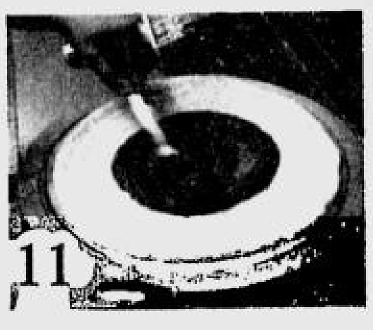
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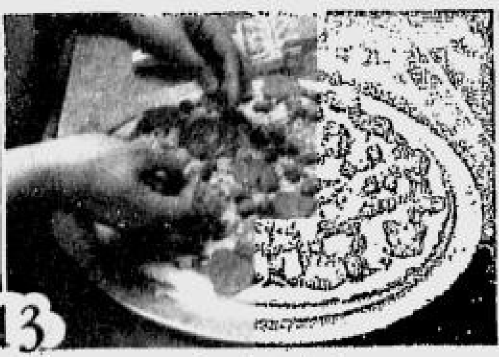
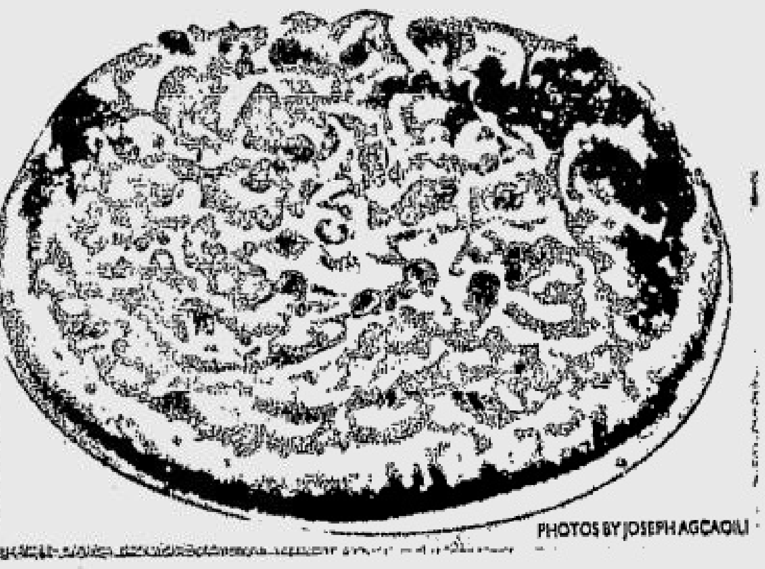


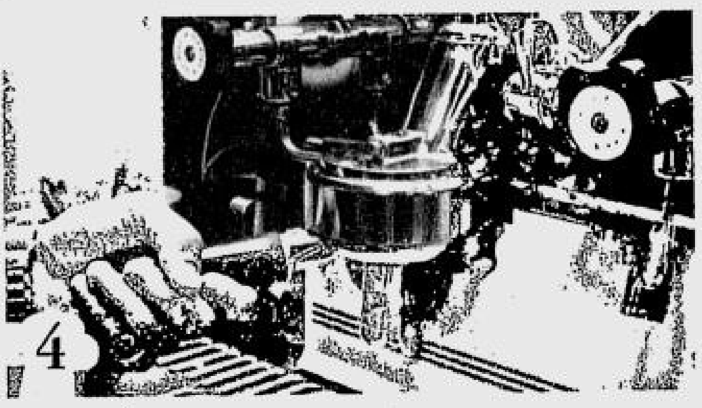


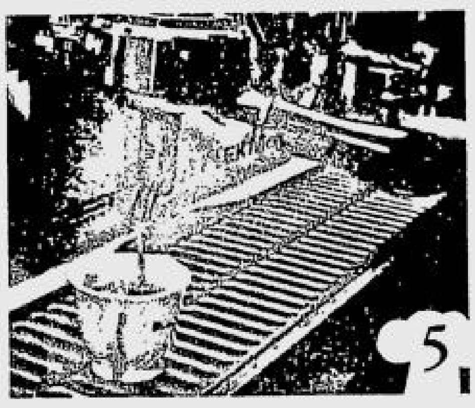
PHOTOS BY JOSEPH AGCAOILI

Mocha Blends

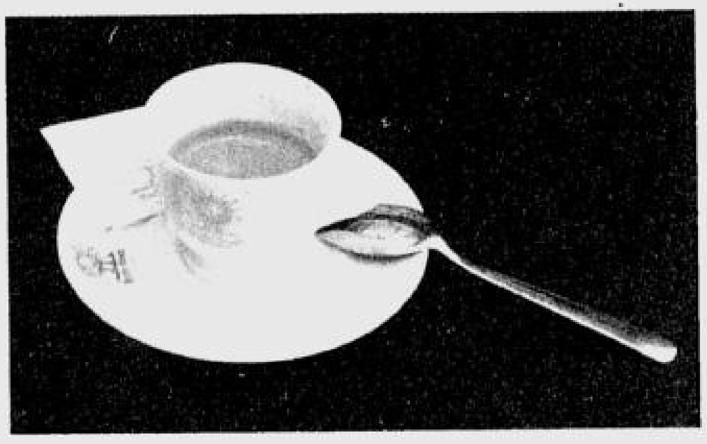
Simple steps to making great coffee—whether you have an espresso or cappuccino machine—as shared to us by Don Don Rosario and Ivy Estrella of Mocha Blends

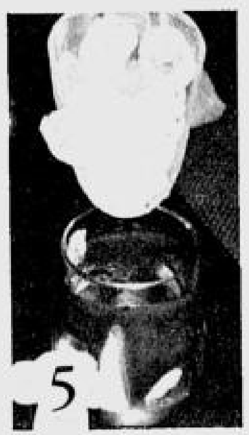
PHOTOS BY ROGER CARRIO

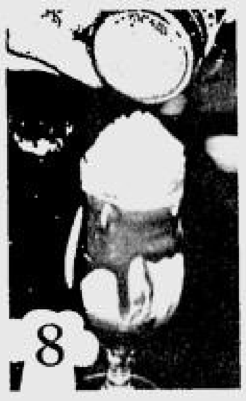




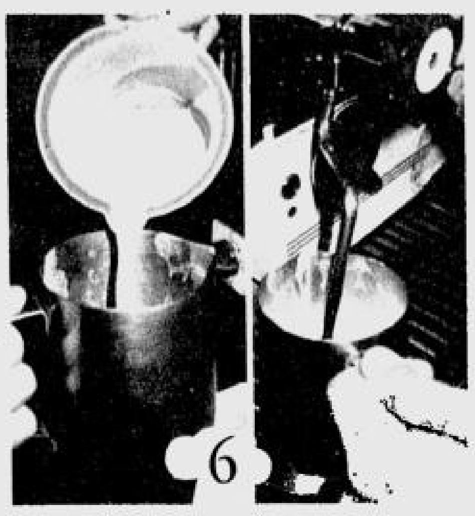
Espresso
1. Grind coffee.
2. Release coffee grinds onto the handle.
3. Tamp the coffee grinds.
4. Place the handle under the group head to extract.
5. Pour into a cup.



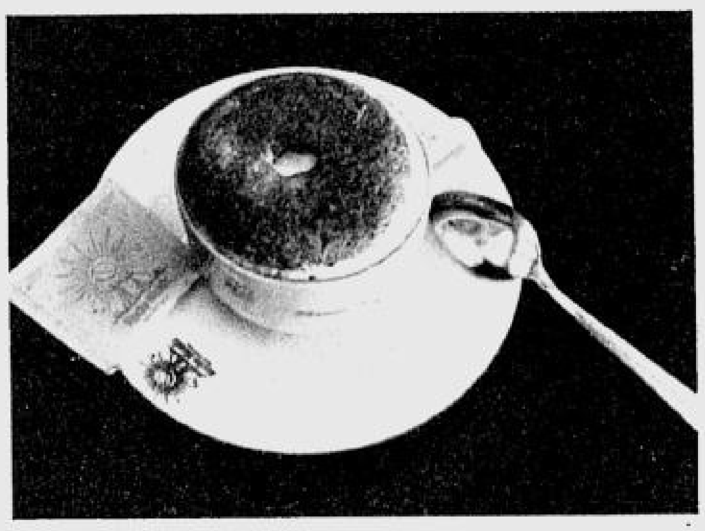




Mocha Frost
1. Pour in coffee essence. (Improvise by mixing coffee with hot water or using coffee-flavored syrup.)
2. Pour in sugar syrup.
3. Pour in chocolate syrup.
4. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream.
5. Add ice cubes.
6. Add milk.
7. Add whipped cream.
8. Top with chocolate dust.



Cappuccino
1. Grind coffee.
2. Release coffee grinds onto the handle.
3. Tamp the coffee grinds.
4. Place the handle under the group head to extract.
5. Pour into a cup.
6. Pour milk in a milk jug and steam it to create froth.
7. Pour the froth inside the cup.
8. Top it with chocolate dust.
9. Pour the milk in the middle of the cup to create the donut dome.



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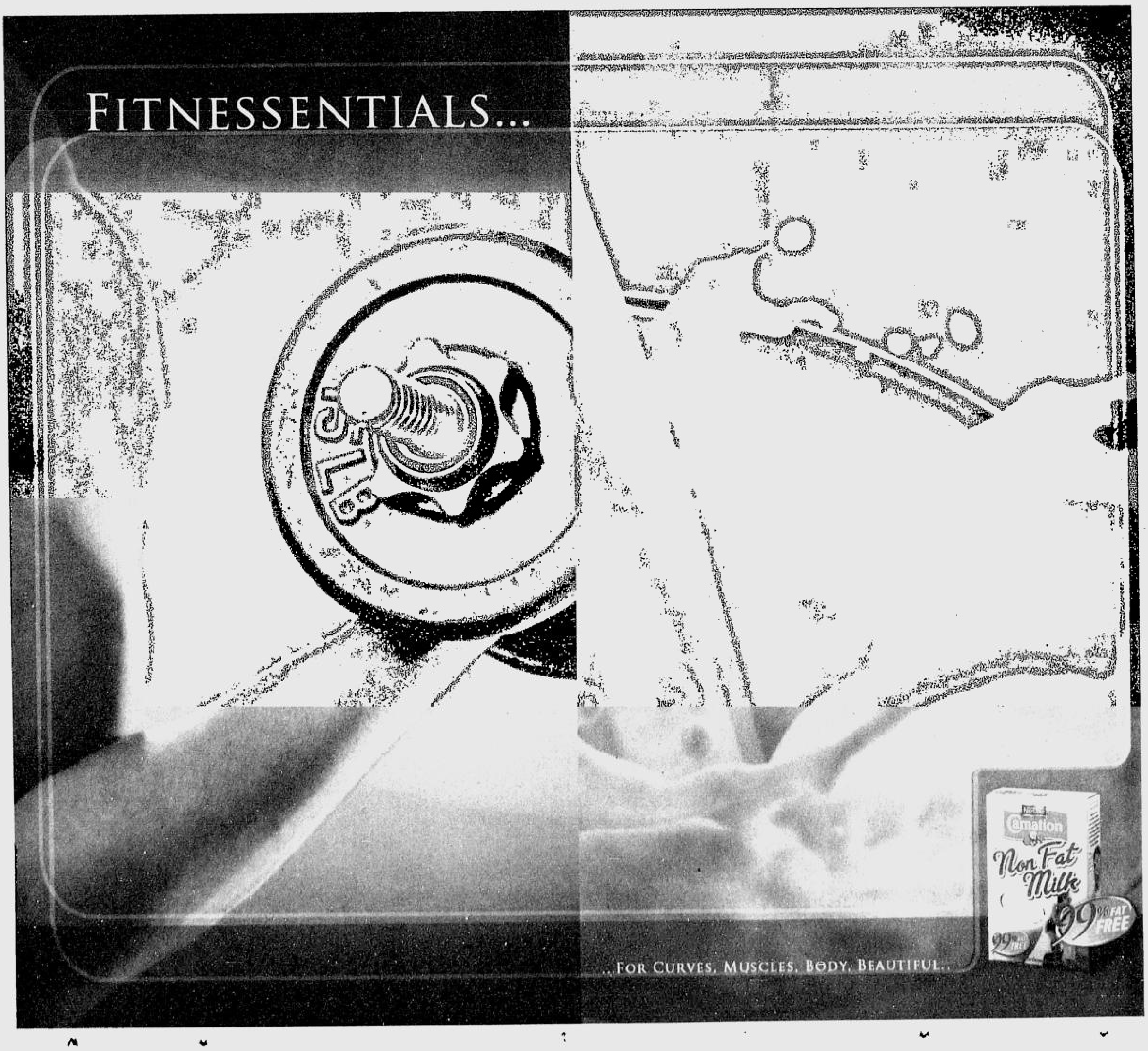

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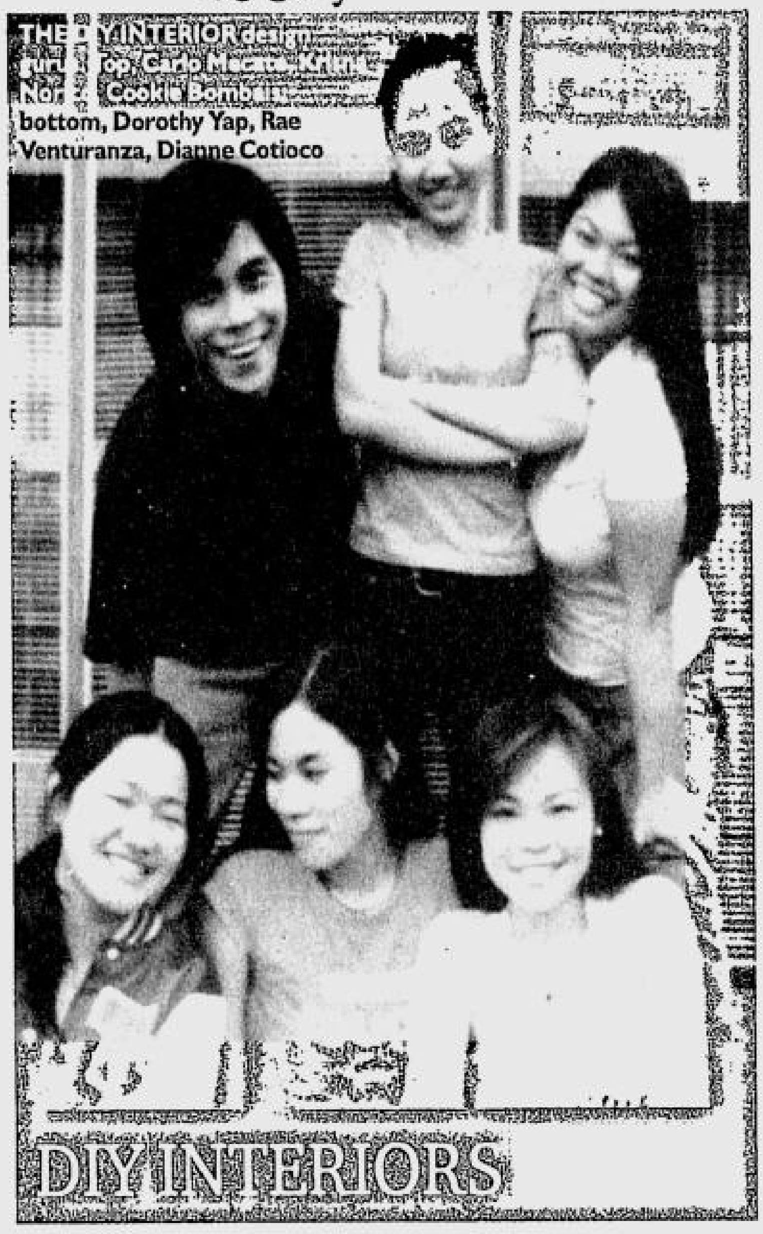

THE DIY INTERIOR design gurus (from top) Carlo Mecate, Krisna Norico, Cookie Bombais; bottom, Dorothy Yap, Rae Venturanza, Dianne Cotioco

DIY INTERIORS

Renovate, redecorate, rearrange

Six student designers share 11 tips on how to redesign your room

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

2BU! sought the advice of six advanced students from the Philippine School of Interior Design (PSID)—Dianne Cotioco, Dorothy Yap, Carlo Mecate, Rae Venturanza, Krisna Norico and Cookie Bombais—on how we can become our very own interior designers.

RENOVATE/ E2

DUNKIN' DONUTS
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FREE!
12 Munchkins when you buy a Niners
FREE!
6 pcs. Choco Bang when you buy a dozen Dunkin' Donuts
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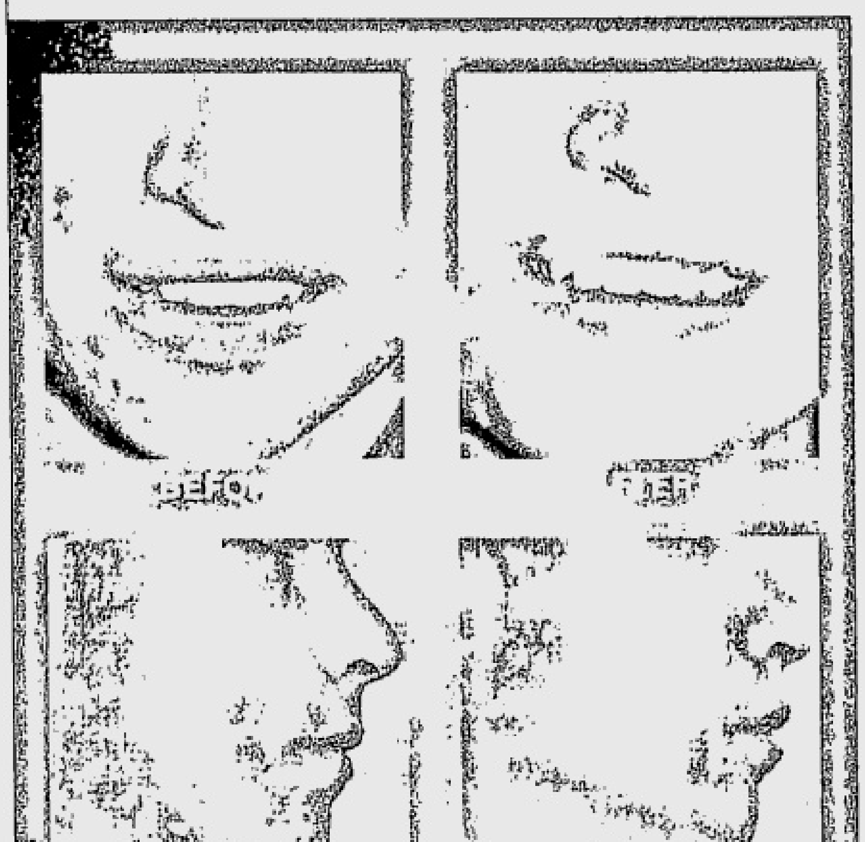
Pamasko ng Bayan

The End To Your Acne Problems

WITHOUT THE PILLS, PAIN OR PRICKING



Acne is a social drawback for people who suffer from it, women especially. It makes them feel self-conscious and insecure about their appearance. Even the best makeup in the world cannot hide unsightly, bumpy pimples. But now, people need not suffer any longer because there is already an easy and effective solution.

Facial Care Centre, the leading skincare professionals who have pioneered technological breakthroughs to help you achieve that much-coveted beautiful-looking skin, now introduces **LightCure Acne Therapy** -- the new anti-acne treatment that brings fast, safe relief to pimple-prone skin minus the pills, pain and pricking.

FDA-approved, LightCure Acne Therapy is scientifically proven to treat acne 3x faster than other methods. While old, traditional acne methods require painful injections or oral & topical medications to diminish acne formation, LightCure carefully selects the most accurate and effective wavelength of UV-free light for acne treatment. Safe, hygienic and effective for all skin types, it decreases skin inflammation and has a long-lasting preventive effect without pigmentary changes and scarring.

Here's how it works: when p.acnes (propionibacterium acnes) bacteria proliferates, it causes infection and inflammation of acne lesions. LightCure covers the entire face with a bright pure lilac light, which penetrates the skin safely and accurately, and selectively destroys p. acnes bacteria without causing harm to surrounding tissues. This will result to a decrease in inflammation and p.acnes bacteria -- thus, a clearer, smoother face.

LightCure clearly makes the difference. Within only a month of treatment, it brings dramatic improvement to pimple-ridden or acne-tormented skin, without aftereffects. The treatment is simple, painless and has been proven very effective. Clients can sit or lie comfortably and listen to relaxing music, while undergoing treatment. It is endorsed and used by leading skin care clinics across five continents, demonstrating long-lasting success. LightCure has gained worldwide recognition and has become one of the most favorite beauty secrets of celebrities and models in the international scene.

LightCure is indeed the most advanced anti-acne treatment available today. So, if you are tired of seeing pimples on your face after trying old, ineffective methods, inquire with the Facial Care Centre professionals now about their LightCure Acne Therapy. Call

892-SKIN (7546).

LightCure Treatment at Facial Care Centre

PURPLE crocheted pouch

These fun projects aren't just for school, and guys can definitely do them too

WITH the finished bracelet

NAPKIN art isn't about folding napkins at the table.

CHRISTMAS décor made easy

Getting crafty

A 20-MYSTERY rosary will keep you busy before and after making it.

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

IF you think crafts are horrible Ghosts of School Projects Past, then you are not alone. I got through grade school Home Economics by asking my parents to "help" me do my projects.

They always wondered why my teachers gave me unreasonable one-day deadlines for projects that took half a semester for a kid to complete. I merely batted my eyelashes innocently and said I didn't know.

There's hope for us goofballs yet. There are a lot of crafts out there that can be done by even the most mechanically challenged. And if you still have doubts about your skills, you can take a few lessons to ensure that you really learn to do things on your own, instead of cheating and having someone else do it for you.

The SMDS (Sta. Maria Della Strada) Hobby & Crafts Club, which started as a church project and is headed by Julie Santos and Dadith Atibagos, not only offers raw materials for all sorts of crafts, but also lessons for anyone who wants to learn.

"People from 5-80 years old come here to learn!" says Santos. "We particularly encourage the youth to do craft; it gives them a chance to express themselves, to bring out any talent they could be hiding."

And these projects aren't useless items that'll merely clutter the house. You could use them as accessories or house décor—nothing like those egg carton projects on Sesame Street.

The SMDS Club teaches these arts to other women as livelihood projects or as hobbies so they can spend their time wisely. And for the holidays, you can sell your work or use them as décor. Nothing wasted, and you get to save yourself a bit of money.

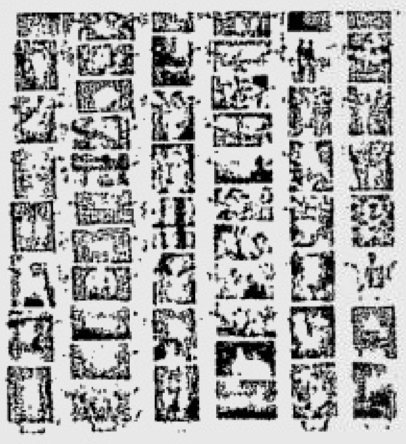
Carlos, my 11-year-old brother, and Nikka, 16-year-old sister, came along to do crafts. See, projects aren't just for school, and guys can definitely do them too.

Napkin-wrapped bottles

Nope, this isn't napkin folding. Old bottles are decorated with printed-paper napkins and stuck on with glue to give them a quaint,

HARD-AT-WORK Carlos with

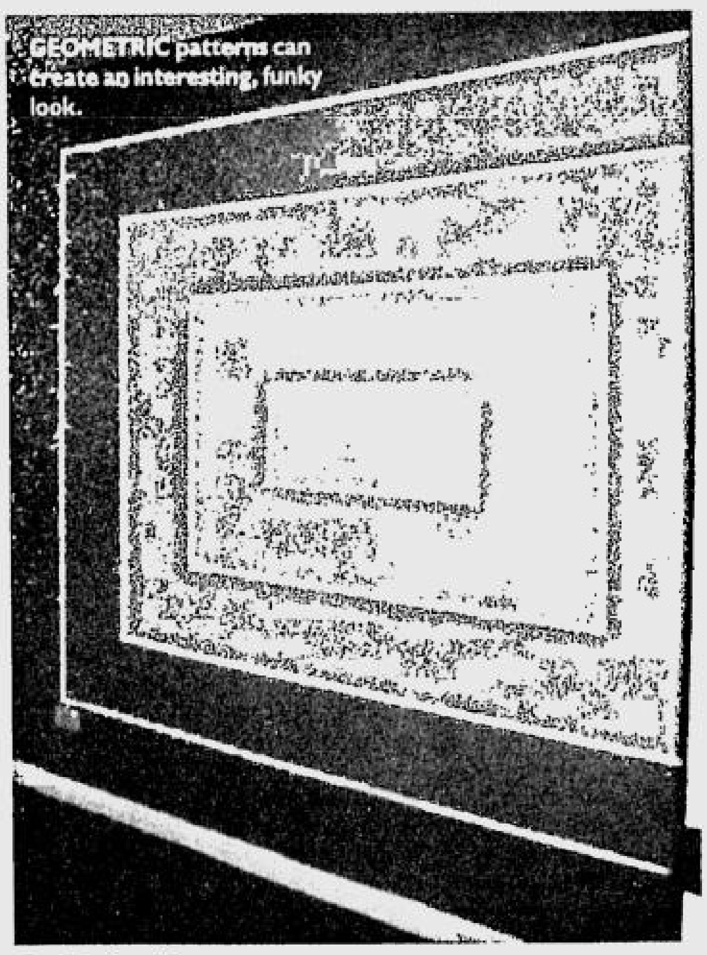
Renovate, redecorate, rearrang



THE RACKS are filled with colorful ethnic postcards that complement the bright sheets and add creative contrast to the plain white walls.

1. Be creative

Do not limit yourself to furniture and accent pieces that have been designated for their specific purpose. Instead of using typical picture frames, for instance, postcard racks are a clever way to put up your favorite photos. They're unique, flexible, and easy to install. They often add a playful, creative contrast to plain white walls.



GEOMETRIC patterns can create an interesting, funky look.

2. Paint!

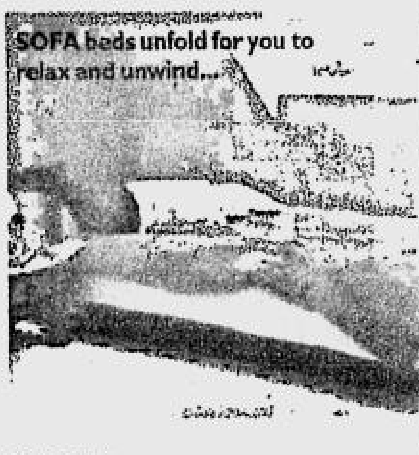
Paint is an effective tool in creating illusions. For instance, a small room can appear bigger with the right color and design. Painting a wall with geometric patterns can create an interesting, funky look.

3. Pick the right color

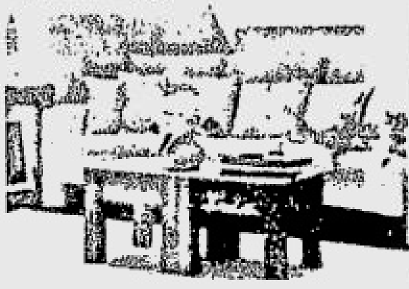
In choosing paint swatches, remember that colors are likely to appear darker when painted on an entire wall. So opt for a color that's one or two shades lighter than your initial choice to avoid ending up with an overwhelming shade.

4. Slice and dice

Keep your bedroom organized by segregating areas into three major functions: comfort, workstation and storage. This will help maintain a disaster-free zone. Now, you can leave your homework lying around while maintaining a clean, comfortable bed to sleep in whenever you need a break from all that studying.



SOFA beds unfold for you to relax and unwind...



...and they are also perfect for entertaining guests.

5. Go for sofa beds

Sofa beds are practical and trendy subst tutes to conventional beds. They adapt to y desired mood or setting, and they don't co sume a lot of space, which makes them ide for small spaces. Go for the kind that allow you to change the covers, so you can have *mananahi* personalize the piece in your fav fabric print!

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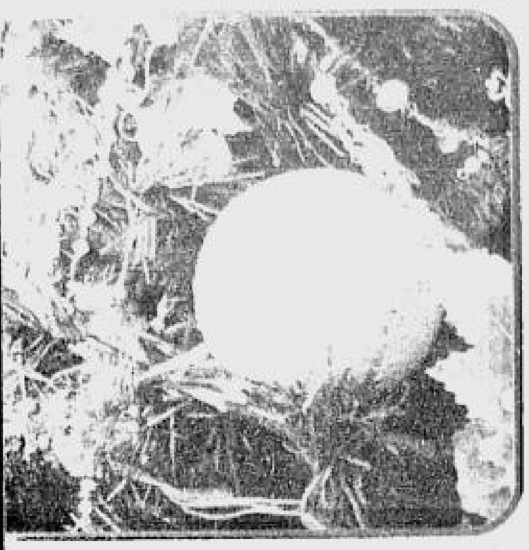


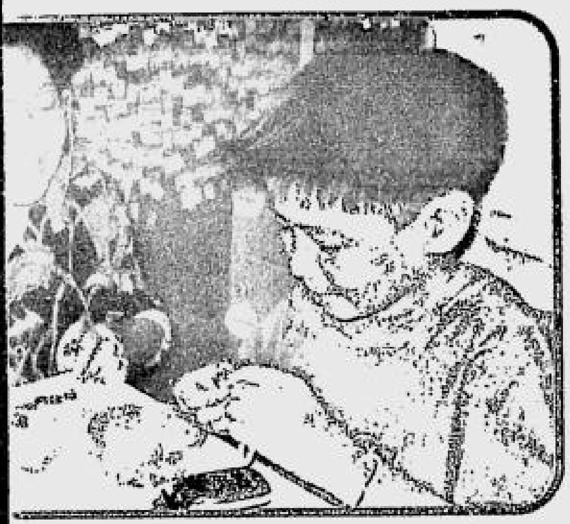
country-ish feel.

You will need old wine bottles, quilted napkins, a bit of paint, and clear glue. Coat the bottle with glue and wrap the napkin around it. Let dry, embellish with a little paint and glitter, and coat once again with a layer of glue and set out to dry.

Decorated eggshells

Ever wondered what could be done with eggshells? Some people in school once crushed them and put them in cookies, but that isn't particularly appetizing.

Instead of eating eggshells, you could turn them into décor. They'd make great Easter eggs or Christmas balls. To do this, poke pin-sized holes into eggs and either blow the contents out or siphon out with an injection. Then paint over or wrap with metallic wrapper, taking care not to crush the eggshells.



Dadith Atibagos, president of the crafts club

Beads

Beads are popular because the possibilities are endless—necklaces, bracelets, earrings, belts, and so on.

For basic accessories, you will need to purchase wire, nylon, clasps, pliers, and beads of all shapes and sizes. Simply string the beads into whatever design you want. Just be as creative as you can.

Bring out some of your accessories and study the way they're assembled. It is also possible to make your own beads with clay; they could be baked in ordinary oven toasters.

Crochet

Crocheting can be time-consuming but rewarding; it takes a lot of time to finish a bag or even a cellphone holder, but if done properly, the finished items last for ages.

Buy a how-to book, which contains patterns for bags, coasters, hair accessories, etc. The materials you need include crocheting thread, a needle, and lots of patience. But again, the results are always worth it, and it's a lot cheaper than buying a crocheted bag.

Cross-stitch

Depending on the pattern, cross-stitching can be very easy or extremely difficult. Start with basic patterns such as cartoons before moving on to portraits or replicas of famous paintings. You'll need Aida cloth, thread, and needles, which are easily found at specialty stores like Stitches N' Things.

Christmas décor

If the trimmings on your tree are getting a bit too expensive (and your cat breaks them anyway), then it's time to consider inexpensive DIY decoration.

Attention-catching Christmas balls are easy to make: buy Styrofoam spheres (available at bookstores), cover with a coat of bright or metallic paint, then stick on sequins or beads with glue. Let dry.

You can also string ropes of colorful beads around the tree in place of tinsel. They'll give your tree a personalized, homey touch—no clones of the trees in malls!

Visit SMDS Hobby & Crafts Club at 2/F 309B Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Q.C. (inside Cello's Doughnuts and Dips), or call 9134713.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunij@yahoo.com

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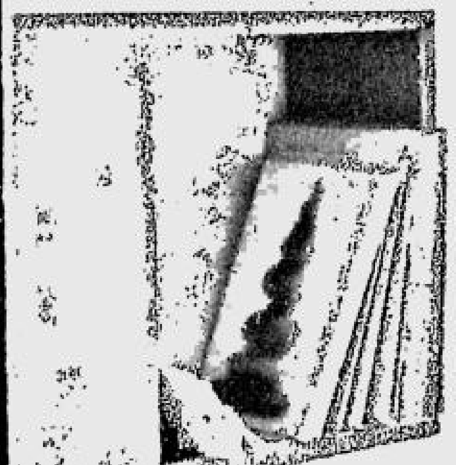
6. Share a room

Many adolescents characterized sharing a room with a sibling as a "pain in the neck." But a great way to set up your room with enough privacy for you both is to hang curtains on swing-arm rods above your bed. Now you have a zone to call your own.

8. Make way for storage

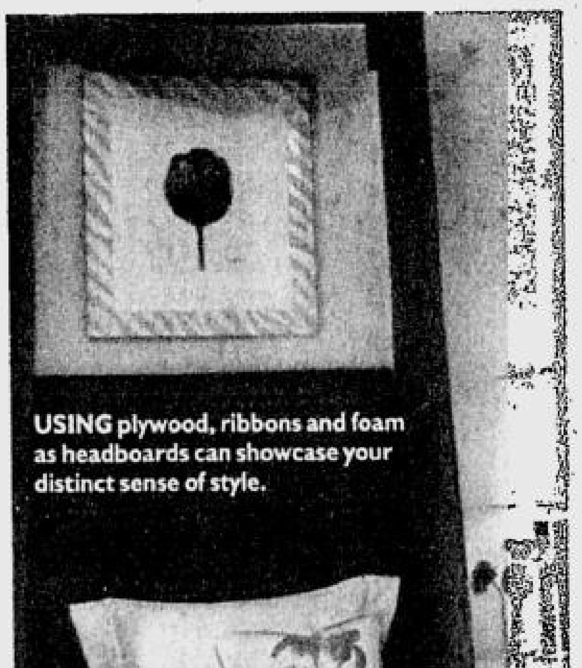
Old shoe boxes can make for fun storage. Cover them up in cute, sparkly wrappers that you can easily find in bookstores and stack them up under your desk or any other convenient part of your room. Apart from adding instant flair, they keep your bedroom clutter-free.

DIY shelves are convenient and easy to construct.



Try shelves

IY shelves are conveniently available in stores
easy to install. With a few pieces of wood and
ux of nails to firmly fix them in place, you're
ly. You can either leave the wood unsmoothed
a shabby chic feel, or you can sand the sur-
es for a polished look. Add in your favorite col-
or apply pretty shapes using stencil templates.



USING plywood, ribbons and foam as headboards can showcase your distinct sense of style.

7. Jazz up your headboard

Another excellent and inexpensive design suggestion is to substitute costly headboards with plywood, ribbons, and foam. You can easily personalize it by picking the fabric and color that best suit your mood. And you can change it whenever you want!

10. Paint your chairs

PAINTED chairs make for great accent pieces.

Pull out those left-over paint and unleash your artistic side! Use them on discarded furniture pieces in your bodega or scout for things that need a makeover. Done well, they make astounding accent pieces that reflect your unique personality.

11. Don't overdo it

Clever and delightful ideas are always exciting. But remember, too much of anything becomes boring. So sort out the things you really want and need, and put away those you feel you can dispense with.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

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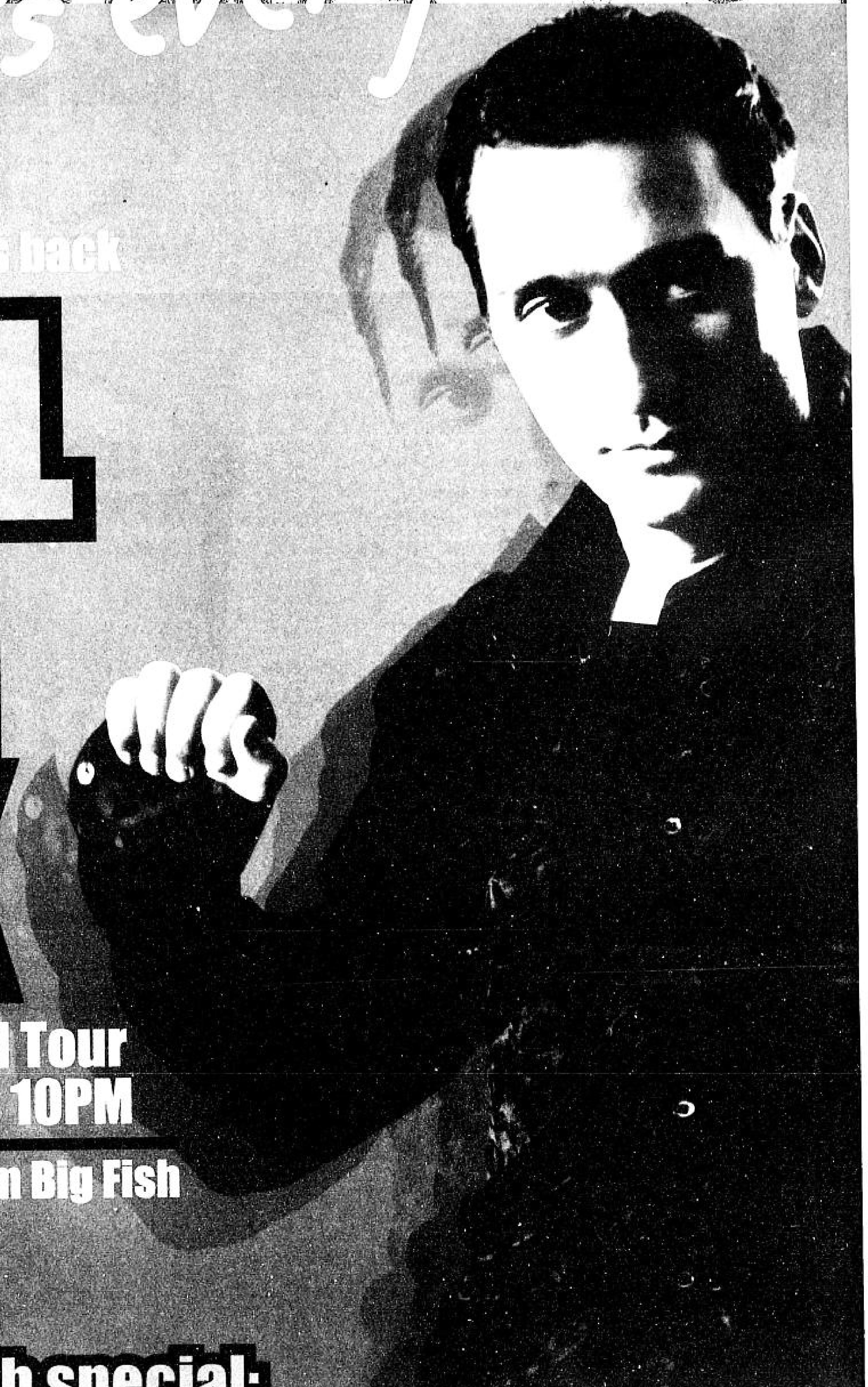

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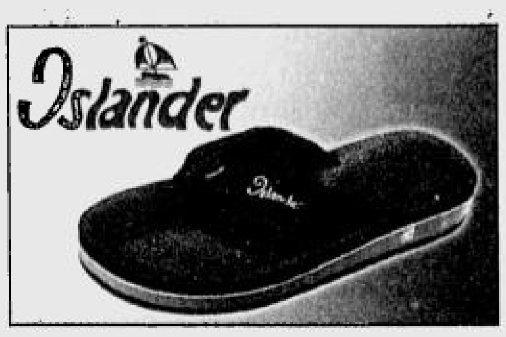

Islander

Hairdo it yourself

BLOW dry hair from the tips.

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Tootoots Leyesa

WHEN was the last time you really fixed your hair? (Not counting the elastic-studded braids yaya did for you back in grade school.)

If the only hairstyle you can duplicate with accuracy is that of Sadako's, then you probably need a new look. But chances are you also don't have time to spend hours in front of the mirror, experimenting with new styles.

However, you don't have to put up with messy buns or flyaway hair all the time. Cool hairdos can actually be done at home. Hair expert Jude Hipolito, Kaizen Salon's International creative director and one of the most sought-after hairstylists in the country, and color specialist Rose Velasco offer instructions for DIY hairdos and tips to keep your hair at its best.

Before doing anything on your own, keep in mind that a good haircut and color will make any DIY hairdo look better. So get a versatile haircut that will allow you to experiment with more styles (instead of limiting you to the look they first gave you in the salon), and everything else will follow.

AUTHOR (center) with Kaizen's Rose Velasco and Jude Hipolito

Hair expert Jude Hipolito and color specialist Rose Velasco offer advice on how to keep tresses in tiptop shape

Always remember to use styling products to enhance whatever look you like, and to avoid hair damage.

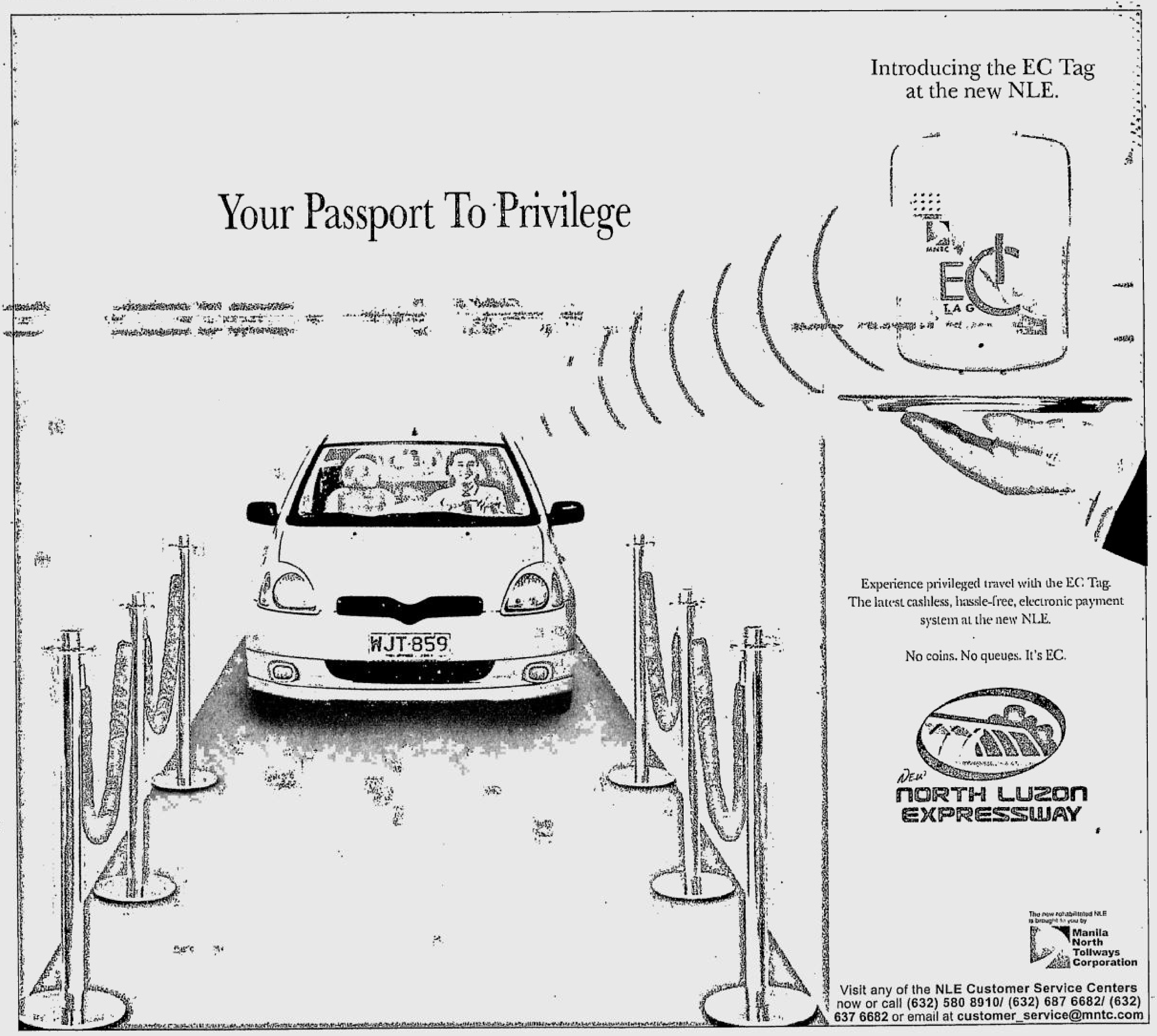
Blow-drying

- Section your hair before drying the smaller portions one at a time.
- Pat your hair dry with a towel before using a blower. Do not rub your hair. Doing so will only make it frizzy.
- While blow-drying your hair, aim the nozzle at the bottom and work your way up instead of aiming it directly at the top of your head. Doing this will prevent difficulties with tangles later on while you brush your hair.
- As much as possible, use cold air to dry your hair. It'll take longer to dry, but it causes less damage to your hair than heat. Finger-style.

Curling

- For curling hair on your own, benders or rollers are easier to use than curling irons.
- Use mousse or soft styling gel to set your

HAIRDO/F3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- PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER -
ComicRelief
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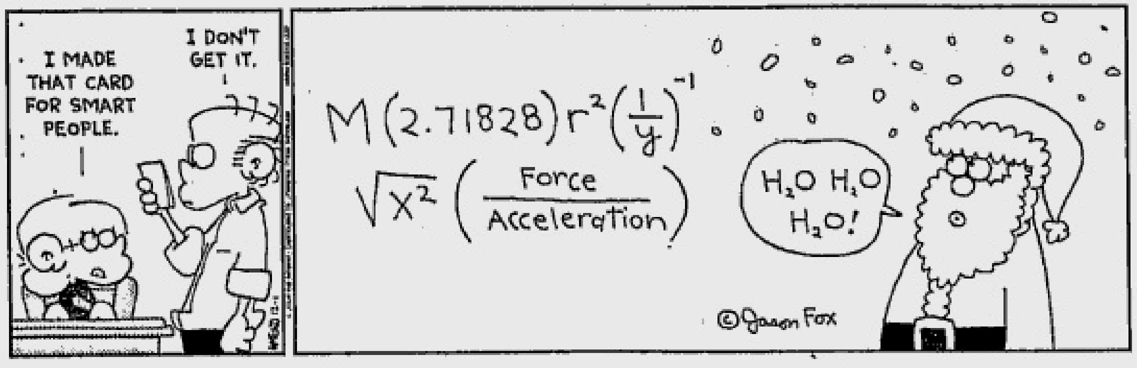
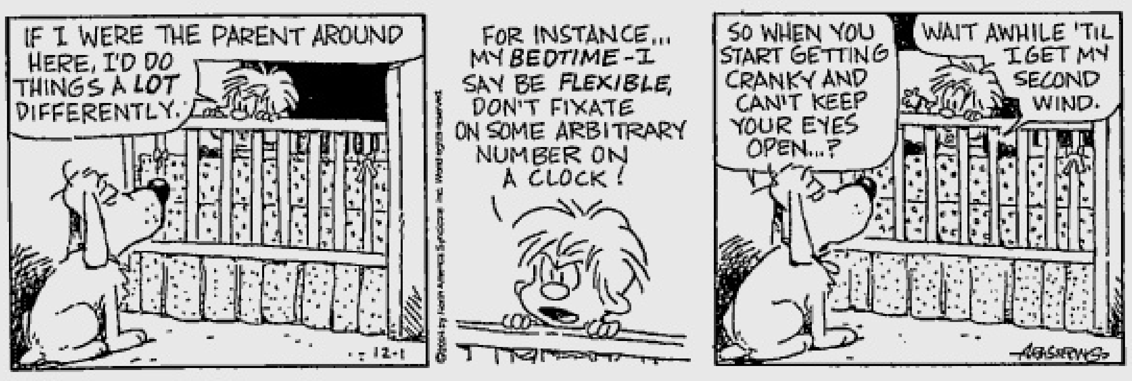
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I MADE THAT CARD FOR SMART PEOPLE.
I DON'T GET IT.
M(2.71828)r²(1/y)⁻¹ √x² (Force/Acceleration)
H₂O H₂O H₂O!
©Jason Fox

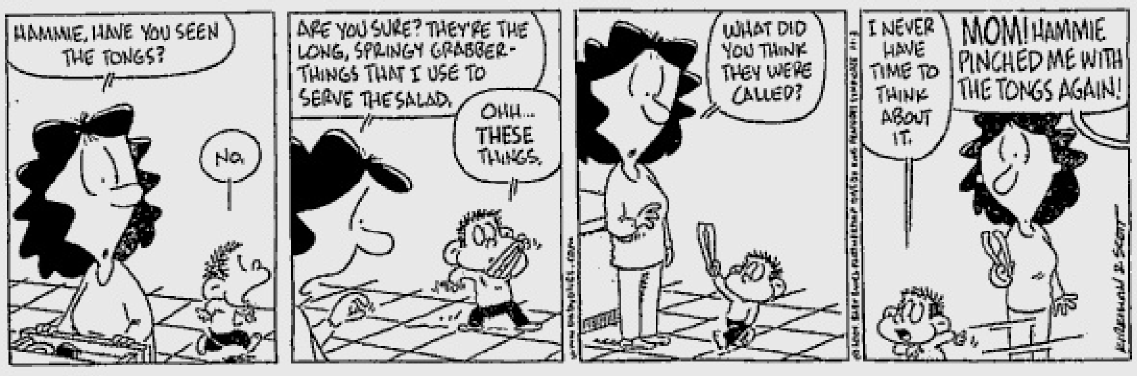
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IF I WERE THE PARENT AROUND HERE, I'D DO THINGS A LOT DIFFERENTLY.
FOR INSTANCE... MY BEDTIME - I SAY BE FLEXIBLE, DON'T FIXATE ON SOME ARBITRARY NUMBER ON A CLOCK!
SO WHEN YOU START GETTING CRANKY AND CAN'T KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN...?
WAIT AWHILE 'TIL I GET MY SECOND WIND.
12-1

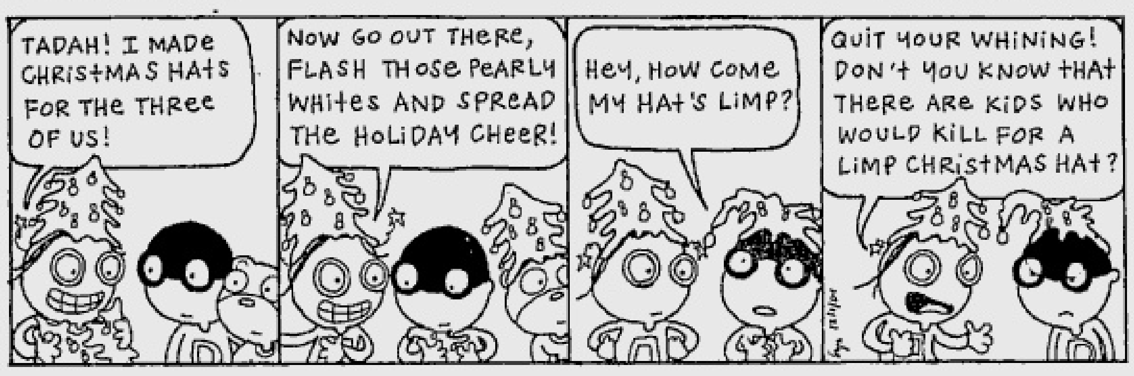
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HAMMIE, HAVE YOU SEEN THE TONGS?
No.
ARE YOU SURE? THEY'RE THE LONG, SPRINGY GRABBER-THINGS THAT I USE TO SERVE THE SALAD.
OHH... THESE THINGS.
WHAT DID YOU THINK THEY WERE CALLED?
I NEVER HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
MOM! HAMMIE PINCHED ME WITH THE TONGS AGAIN!

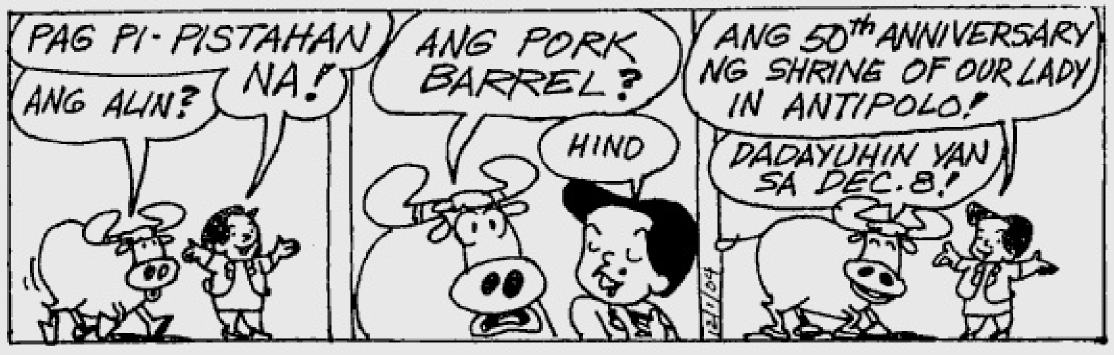
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


TADAH! I MADE CHRISTMAS HATS FOR THE THREE OF US!
NOW GO OUT THERE, FLASH THOSE PEARLY WHITES AND SPREAD THE HOLIDAY CHEER!
HEY, HOW COME MY HAT'S LIMP?
QUIT YOUR WHINING! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE KIDS WHO WOULD KILL FOR A LIMP CHRISTMAS HAT?

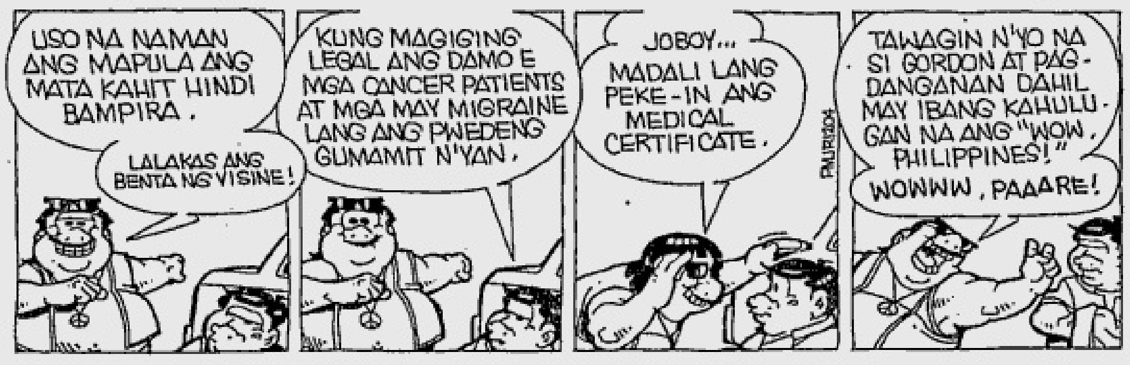
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAG PI-PISTAHAN NA!
ANG ALIN?
ANG PORK BARREL?
HIND
12/1/04
ANG 50th ANNIVERSARY NG SHRINE OF OUR LADY IN ANTIPOLO!
DADAYUHIN YAN SA DEC. 8!

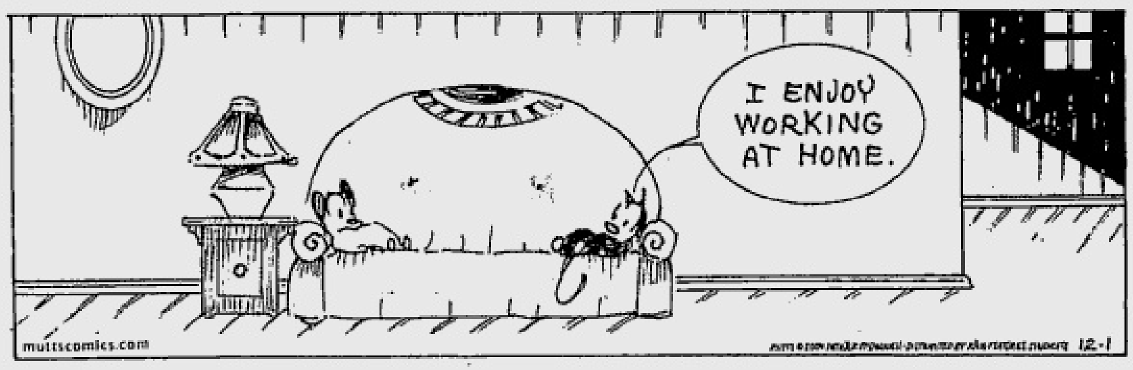
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


USO NA NAMAN ANG MAPULA ANG MATA KAHIT HINDI BAMPIRA.
LALAKAS ANG BENTA NG VISINE!
KUNG MAGIGING LEGAL ANG DAMO E MGA CANCER PATIENTS AT MGA MAY MIGRAINE LANG ANG PWEDENG GUMAMIT N'YAN.
JOBOY... MADALI LANG PEKE-IN ANG MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.
TAWAGIN N'YO NA SI GORDON AT PAG-DANGANAN DAHIL MAY IBANG KAHULUGAN NA ANG "WOW, PHILIPPINES!"
WOWWW, PAAARE!

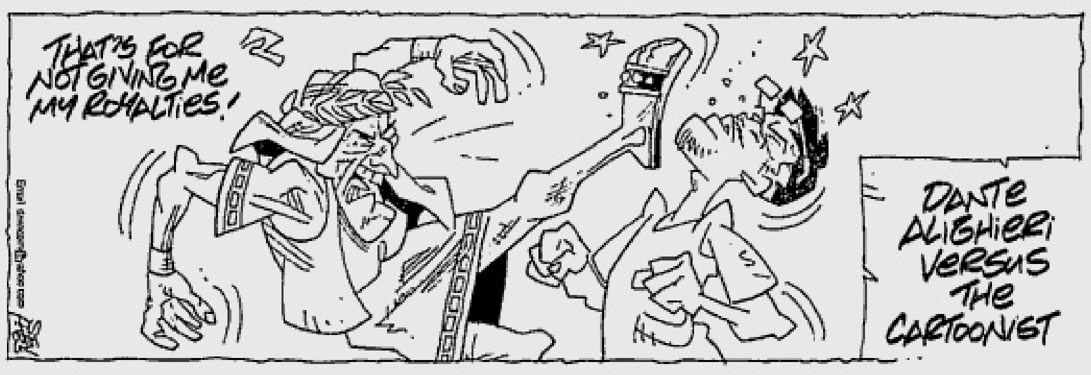
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I ENJOY WORKING AT HOME.
muttscomics.com
12-1

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THAT'S FOR NOT GIVING ME MY ROYALTIES!
DANTE ALIGHIERI VERSUS THE CARTOONIST

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're dynamic, extroverted and people-oriented. You have high ideals, and you will speak out about your values. You believe that people should treat each other decently. You are generous with your time and your money. You want to make a difference in this world. Important choices face you this year: Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Bette Midler, actress/singer; Woody Allen, comedian/film actor/director; Carol Alt, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Expect to hear from friends and contacts from other countries or a long distance away. Old political and religious discussions seem to surface once again.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In the next few weeks, you can wrap up a lot of old business connected with wills, inheritances, insurance matters and shared property. It will all come together nicely.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): you'll definitely encounter old partners and friends from the past. That's why it's good to look your best at all times in the next month.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Now is the time to finish up old business at work. It's not a good time to tackle new projects. Finish what you started first.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You will definitely run into ex-lovers and old flames now and in the next few weeks. They say living well is the best revenge. Therefore, look happy and confident (even if you have to fake it).

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Stock the fridge, because relatives you haven't seen for a while will be on your doorstep. Family reunions are also likely in the next few weeks.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Pay your telephone bill. Take care of any problems that could interrupt your communications with others. Similarly, stay on top of car problems. Transportation and communication delays are inevitable now!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): If you're looking for work, go back to previous contacts. Now and in the next few weeks, it's hard to create new business. Finish up what is already on your plate.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Mercury is in retrograde in your sign now. It will stay this way until Dec. 20. That's why you're forgetting things, dropping things and you can't find anything. Have patience.

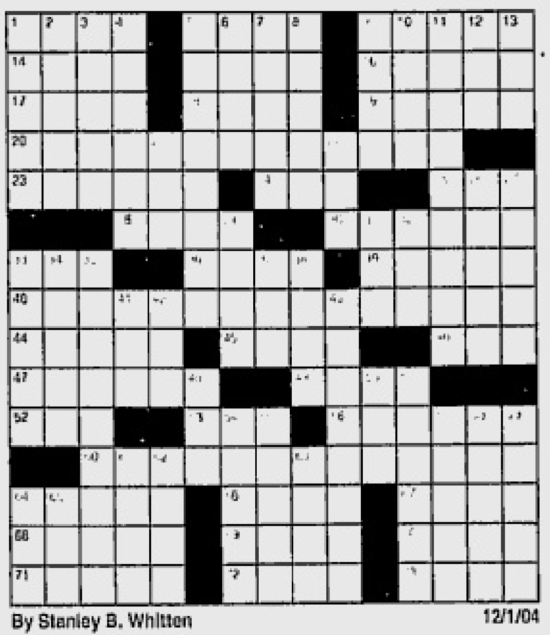
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The next few weeks are a wonderful opportunity to finish up old business. Wrap up delays in dealing with governments, prisons and hospitals. This will go quickly.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're running into old friends now. People from the past are popping up out of the woodwork! It's important to know people you have a history with. Welcome these encounters.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might have to defend your past actions to someone in authority. You'll also likely run into old bosses. Be friendly.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Lambaste
5 Festival
9 Layers
14 Focal point
15 Money of Iran
16 Japanese immigrant
17 Opposed to, in Dogpatch
18 Against
19 Church table
20 Opportunistic start
23 Not spoken
24 Part of SASE
25 CIA forerunner
28 Itemize
30 Feinstein or Wiest
33 Grads-to-be
36 Klutz's comment
39 Leon land
40 Woolgatherer s condition
44 Cove
45 Continental dough
46 Golfer's gadget
47 Sailor's jacket
49 Hebrew month
52 Starter's starter?
53 Tax agcy.
56 "Norma" and "Louise"
60 Deceptively
64 Missouri river
66 Fashion
67 Excessive anger
68 Ball beauty
69 Male moose
70 Brickell or Falco
71 Signed, as a contract
72 Pub quaffs
73 Break



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

12/1/04

DOWN
1 Military muddle
2 Start a surfing session
3 Mexican sayonara
4 __ telepathy
5 Family member
6 Isn't wrong?
7 Shaping machine
8 UFO passenger
9 Genoa farewell
10 Capital of Norway
11 Space station visitor
12 Afternoon social
13 Knight's title
21 Davis Love __
22 Movie on a PC
26 Nastily derogatory
27 Good judgment
29 Carryall
31 Small pc. of land
32 GI mail drop
33 English county
34 Russo and Descartes
35 Product pitch
37 Dien Bien _
38 Bone-dry
41 3 on the dial
42 Israel or Jacob follower
43 Blimp and Sanders
48 Trucker's truck
50 Vert. bars on goods
51 PBS news anchor
54 Cuban dance
55 Korean capital
57 19th-century English writer
58 Patronage
59 Target shooting
61 Glare at
62 Require
63 Taking it easy
64 Sapporo sash
65 D.C. VIP

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	M	A	■	A	B	L	E	■	C	L	A	R	K
T	E	E	D	■	L	O	O	N	■	A	E	R	I	E
O	V	A	L	■	L	O	O	T	■	H	A	N	O	N
M	I	N	I	M	U	M	S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y
■	■	■	B	A	R	■	C	R	A	S	■	E	S	A
A	N	I	■	N	I	L	■	■	R	O	C	■	■	■
D	E	S	T	I	N	I	E	S	■	■	P	O	R	T
A	V	E	R	A	G	E	M	E	A	S	U	R	E	S
M	E	R	E	■	■	O	U	N	C	E	S	C	A	P
■	■	■	S	R	A	■	■	D	C	L	■	A	D	S
A	H	A	■	A	M	E	S	■	E	M	S	■	■	■
M	A	X	I	M	U	M	C	A	P	A	C	I	T	Y
A	N	I	T	A	■	B	O	L	T	■	O	L	E	O
H	O	N	E	L	■	E	P	E	E	■	R	I	N	K
S	I	G	M	A	■	D	E	E	D	■	N	A	T	O

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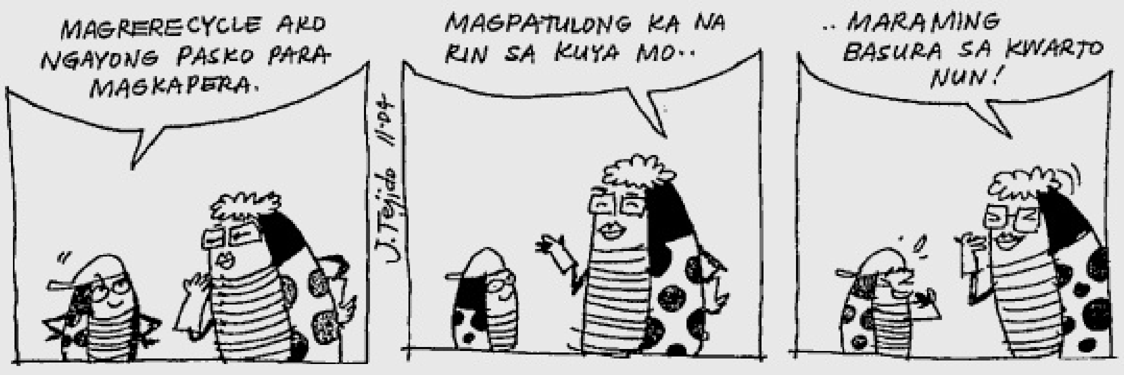
12/1/04

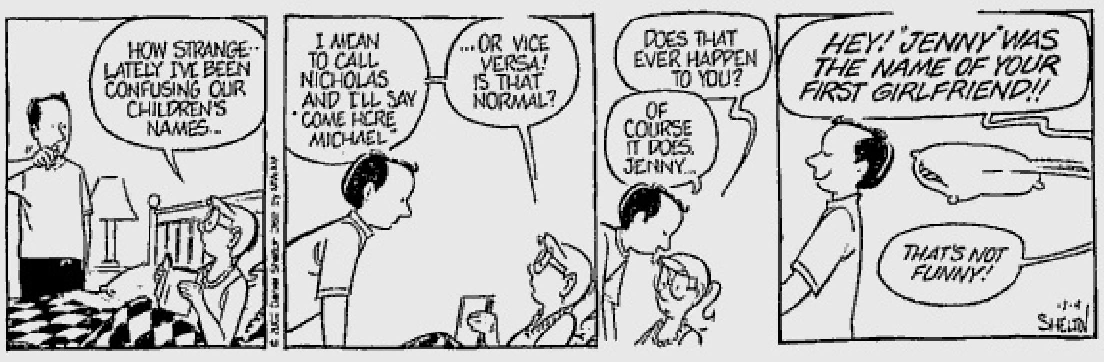
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAGRERECYCLE AKO NGAYONG PASKO PARA MAGKAPERA.
J. Tejido 11-04
MAGPATULONG KA NA RIN SA KUYA MO..
.. MARAMING BASURA SA KWARTO NUN!

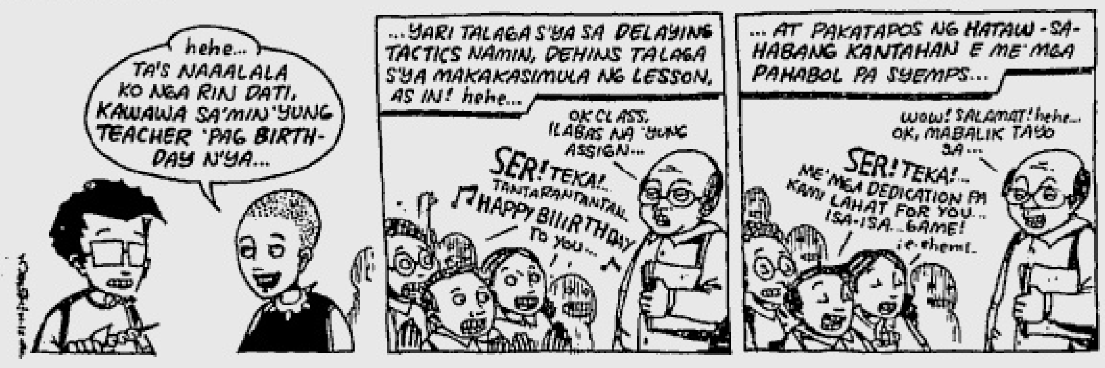
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HOW STRANGE.. LATELY I'VE BEEN CONFUSING OUR CHILDREN'S NAMES..
I MEAN TO CALL NICHOLAS AND I'LL SAY 'COME HERE, MICHAEL'
...OR VICE VERSA! IS THAT NORMAL?
DOES THAT EVER HAPPEN TO YOU?
OF COURSE IT DOES, JENNY...
HEY! "JENNY" WAS THE NAME OF YOUR FIRST GIRLFRIEND!!
THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
SHELTON

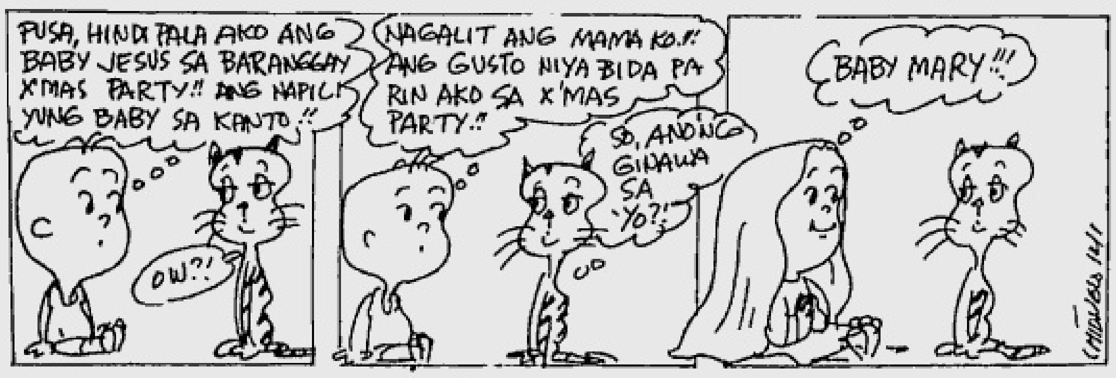
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... TA'S NAAALALA KO NGA RIN DATI, KAWAWA SA'MIN 'YUNG TEACHER 'PAG BIRTHDAY N'YA...
...YARI TALAGA S'YA SA DELAYING TACTICS NAMIN, DEHINS TALAGA S'YA MAKAKASIMULA NG LESSON, AS IN! hehe...
OK CLASS, ILABAS NA 'YUNG ASSIGN...
SER! TEKA!
TANTARANTANTAN...
♫HAPPY BIIIRTHDAY TO YOU...
... AT PAKATAPOS NG HATAW-SA-HABANG KANTAHAN E ME' MGA PAHABOL PA SYEMPS...
WOW! SALAMAT! hehe... OK, MABALIK TAYO SA...
SER! TEKA!.. ME' MGA DEDICATION PA KAMI LAHAT FOR YOU.. ISA-ISA..GAME!
ie-ehem!

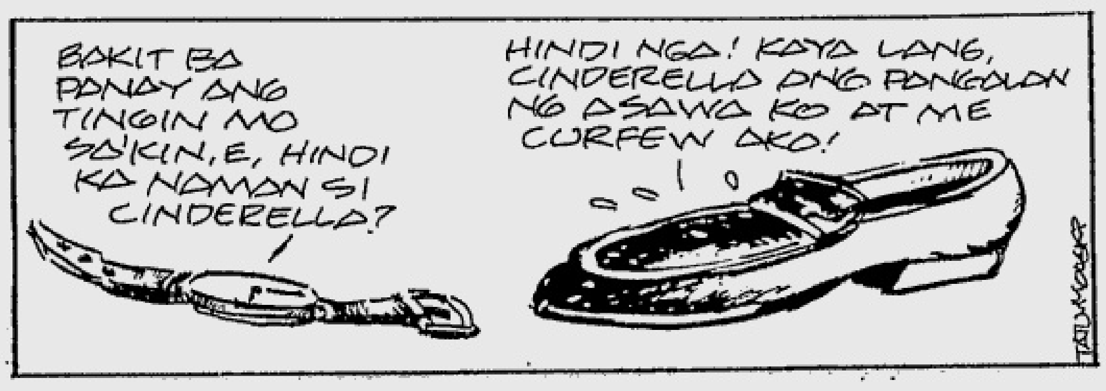
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, HINDI PALA AKO ANG BABY JESUS SA BARANGGAY X'MAS PARTY!! ANG NAPILI YUNG BABY SA KANTO!!
OW?!
NAGALIT ANG MAMA KO!! ANG GUSTO NIYA BIDA PA RIN AKO SA X'MAS PARTY!!
SO, ANONG GINAWA SA 'YO?!
BABY MARY!!!
CHIONGLO 12-1

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BAKIT BA PANAY ANG TINGIN MO SA'KIN, E, HINDI KA NAMAN SI CINDERELLA?
HINDI NGA! KAYA LANG, CINDERELLA ANG PANGALAN NG ASAWA KO AT ME CURFEW AKO!

TOP beauty advice: cleanse, tone and moisturize.

BEAUTY school students for a day

Makeup class

CLINIQUE-happy author

By Tammy David
Correspondent

THERE are types of people I envy. The ones with amazing metabolism, the students who get good grades without studying, the girls who look effortlessly beautiful any time of the day and lastly, the girls who can put on makeup like a pro.

For me, the ability to enhance one's beauty using makeup is a talent.

I may have fair skin but since I don't take care of it I end up having a sallow complexion. I grew up with sisters who don't put on makeup most of the time since we can get away with our relatively clear skin. I'm the type who goes to school with wet hair and pillow marks on my face and would get comments like "Mukhang Patay," "Sabog," "Espasol," and 'Junkie."

Well, I got fed up with those comments and started to look for makeovers. I would join some but when it was time to wash my face, I'd be back to looking like Uncle Fester.

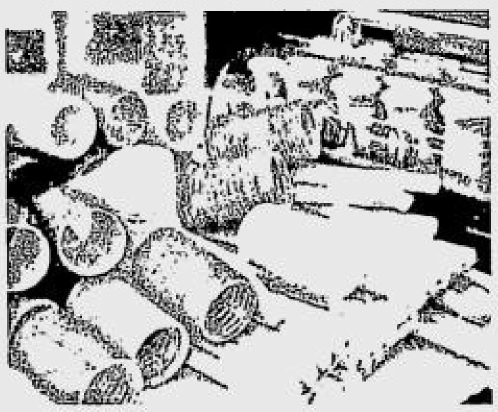
So I decided to just learn how to put on makeup myself. I bought stacks of beauty magazines and tried to experiment with the limited makeup at home. But it was nearly always a disaster.

But I discovered hope and a new love for makeup when I attended the makeup workshops of Rustan's. I attended two: the Bobbi Brown workshop at Tower Club Makati and another one presented by Clinique in Bon Appetit.

This was not your typical makeover session where somebody fixed you up and you felt pretty for the day. I actually learned something since participants were forced to do things on our own. Those handling the workshops, like Australian makeup artist Tanya from Bobbi Brown, just advised what to do and which type of makeup or shade to use.

MAKEUP/ F4

Hairdo it yourself



GET curly locks with velcro rollers, benders, or hot rollers.

From page F1

hair before putting on the rollers.

- Use a good hairspray to keep the curls intact.
- Your hair should be 90 percent dry before using benders or curlers. Hot rollers or curling irons should be used on completely dry hair to prevent damage.

Ponytail

- After gathering your hair into a ponytail, take a small section of hair from under the ponytail and wrap it around the rest of your hair.
- Secure with a couple of pins and a spritz of hairspray.

WRAP hair around the base of the ponytail.

Finger waves/finger styling

- Apply anti-frizz serum and mousse on one-inch sections of hair.
- Wrap the section of hair around your pointer finger and twist. This will create soft waves around your face, adding a decorative touch to an otherwise plain hairdo.

Hair color

- Always check the condition of your hair and scalp before coloring. If it's damaged, do not attempt to color it even more.
- It's always easier to darken your hair color rather than having it lightened if you're coloring on your own. Going lighter is best done professionally (You wouldn't want orange hair, would you?)
- Read instructions. Too many people have flubbed up hair color because they neglected to follow instructions properly.

Visit Kaizen Salon at The Courtyard, 26 Sgt. Esguerra St., South Triangle, Q.C., or call 9285588.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com.

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Makeup class

From page F3

Tips

So here are some tidbits I learned from the recent Clinique workshops.

·Makeup is like coloring. Instead of a coloring book, you color your face. So if there is a patch that needs color, put on some makeup.

·Pimples do not come from the food you eat. You can control the oil by cleaning your skin thoroughly.

·Pores do not shrink. Age and gravity are factors that make pores bigger.

·If you do not remove dead skin cells or clean thoroughly, creams or moisturizers will not work, as they will not be absorbed.

·Moisturizers are necessary even for oily skin, since they make skin look refined.

·Ninety percent of skin damage is due to sun, stress and lifestyle. SPF is basic prevention. Also, use sun block before makeup.

·Birth control pills are not advisable to be part of any skin care regimen since they just control the hormones. They will affect not only the face but the whole body as well.

·Concealer should be two shades lighter than the foundation. In applying concealer, do not drag but dab.

·Foundation should be yellow-based for Asians. Apply on the eye area last. As much as possible, use the fingers so that areas without foundation can be felt.

·Always trim, shape or pluck the eyebrows since they frame the face. Use eyebrow pencil (brown or gray) to draw. Avoid using black since the color is too dark and leaves no room for mistakes.

·The minimum number of shades for eye shadow is three. Since Asians do not have wide-set eyes, eye shadow is needed to contour.

·In applying blush, it should not go above the eyebrows or below the nostrils.

Call the Bobbi Brown Team (tel. 8133739 loc. 25) and Clinique (tel. 8943521.)

E-mail the author at tammygdavid@yahoo.com.

ANELA Reyes gets some tips from a makeup expert.

All by myself—happily

Here's a do-it-yourself checklist to challenge your independence

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

THERE are activities that we think we can do only when with companions. Like having a manicure, going out on a Saturday night or dating.

But try stripping off shyness, laziness and fear of failure and you'll realize that some activities—even if we've grown to consider them as group ones—can still bring fun and fulfillment even when done alone.

Here's a do-it-yourself checklist to challenge your independence.

Eat

Some of us just lazily wait for our tray of food while our significant other is left with the sometimes tedious task of lining up, ordering and even paying for our food.

For a change, why not experience falling in line and dealing with crew members who are sometimes deaf and mathematically-challenged? If that's not enough for a quick test of independence, you might as well pay for your own grub and eat by your lonesome.

I used to be terrified of eating a McChicken meal all alone in one corner, overly conscious of what people would think of me. But now I couldn't care less. I can actually eat squid balls in the foodcourt—all by myself!

Travel

Backpacking to other places is always an exciting adventure. While most of us believe it's more fun to tag along companions, going solo can still prove to be as—or even more—fun and beneficial.

If you're the type who just follows the leader and the pack, take this opportunity to make your own map, set your own pace and reach your desired destination. No chum to impatiently wait for, babysit or give Diatabs to.

Don't be afraid to ask questions from people who don't look like they're murderers. Enjoy the fresh scenery and make sure you document your trip—even if it means asking locals to take your pictures.

Watch a movie

Sure, laughing your innards out with your classmates while watching "White Chicks" is enjoyable, but don't let being movie mate-less stop you from dying of laughter, bursting into tears and basically enjoying a flick.

Consider the bright side. At least you won't think twice about flooding the cinema with your tears. At least you won't get shouted at for belonging to a noisy group. And there'd be no one to annoy you with a megaphoned blow-by-blow account of the movie.

Drive or commute

How many times have you emphasized your brattiness by ordering your driver to bring you everywhere on no time flat? How many times have you designated unwilling friends and relatives as drivers while you enjoyed la-la land?

For the sake of benevolence, take the steering wheel and have your share of Metro Manila's undying traffic and impossible drivers.

And shame on you if you haven't commuted alone. Know that there is always a lesson to learn from experiencing a jeepney mate's bag being dissected or sitting next to a pervert.

Cook

Suppose the maid got hitched with the village guard. Or there's no access to fastfood, or your crush of a lifetime is coming over and you need to make a big impression on his esophagus and intestines. Realize the importance of knowing how to cook—for others and for yourself.

Do housework

While some of us are applause-worthy for being able to wash and press clothes, there are those who simply can't, even if their lives depended on it.

Blame it on the maids for working so hard. Okay, let's also blame ourselves for overdependence. Whoever deserves the pointing finger, it wouldn't hurt to actually learn how to do house chores, just in case Inday packs her bags and badmouths you to her posse.

You know it won't hurt. Consider it as training for a life on your own somewhere soon.

Go to church

Shame on you if you go to church just to be with your friends! Be covered by goose bumps if you attend Mass just to flaunt your fashion sense! And super-shame on you if you do it just to be able to spend time with your lover!

The church is a holy place meant for some quality time with God (and don't snicker at me). Do go alone, concentrate, pray, reflect and rid yourself of distractions.

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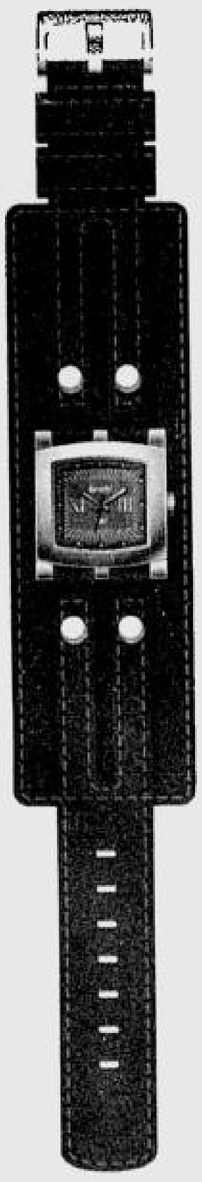
Time to shine

Story on page G2



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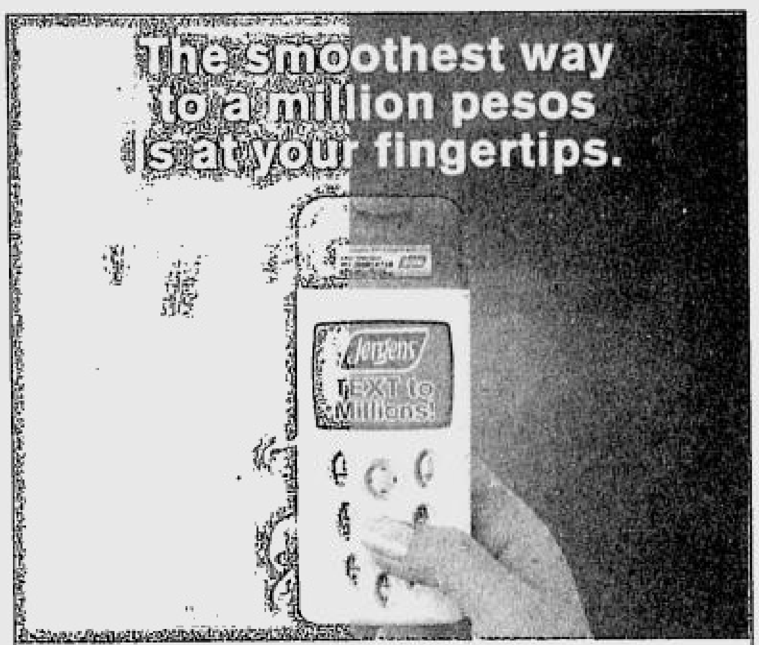

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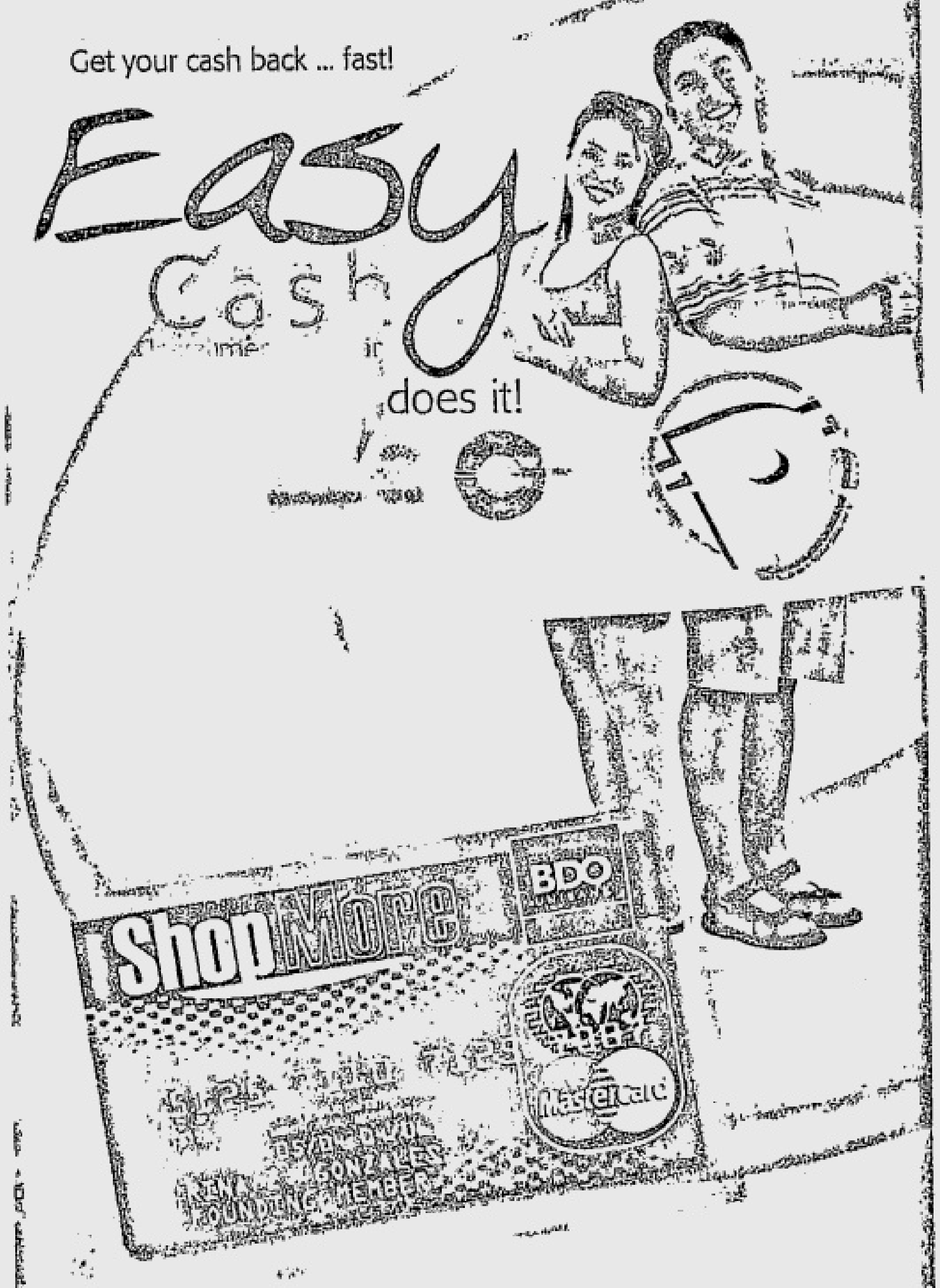

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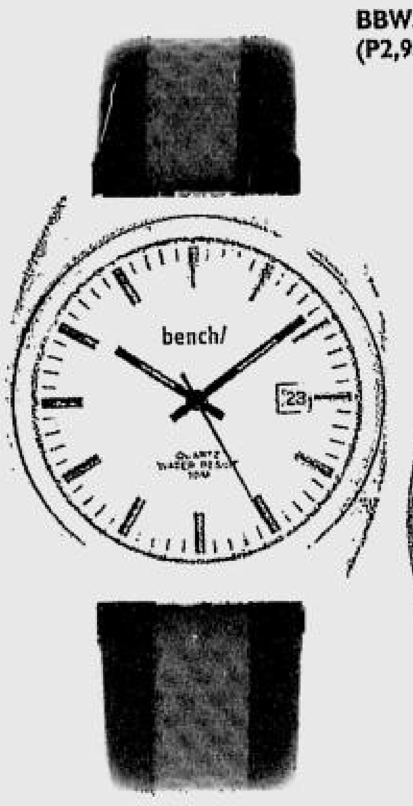
Time to shine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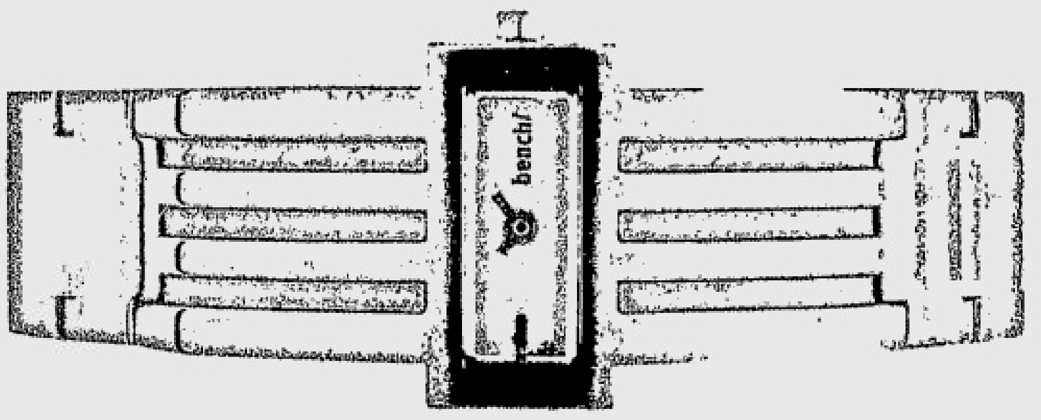
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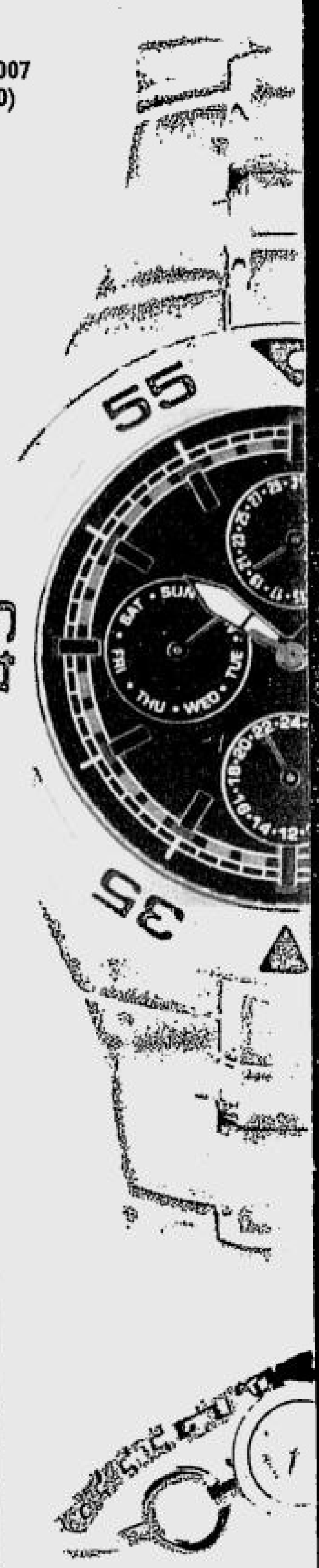
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YWA0020
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BENCH notches another first by launching a collection of valuable and high-quality watches under the label Bench/Time.

Bench/Time was developed by Bench and a team of watch specialists and designers. The timepieces are made from surgical-grade, solid stainless steel which passes Swiss watchmaking standards. Buckles are also fitted with a double-lock mechanism that ensures that the watch stays in place, regardless of how vigorous the wearer's activity may be. These watches are water-resistant, so they are protected from moisture.

Bench/Time initially offers three lines: Fashion—hip and trendy watches for the stylish and sophisticated; Sports—durable and functional watches for active athletes; and Classics—watches with designs that never go out of style for vintage lovers.

Bench/Time will gradually increase its line by launching two major collections embracing new styles and designs during the summer and holiday seasons.

Bench has partnered with L Time Studio, the country's leading lifestyle watch store which offers the largest collection of fashion, sports and lifestyle watch brands, to exclusively distribute Bench/Time.

Bench/Time watches are available at Bench outlets at Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall, Glorietta 3, Power Plant Mall, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, SM Centerpoint, Robinsons Place Ermita, SM Manila, SM Fairview, SM Pampanga, SM Southmall, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, Market! Market!, Greenhills and Shangri-La Plaza Mall; at Herbench outlets at Glorietta 3, SM Megamall, SM Manila and SM North Edsa; and at L Time Studio branches at Alabang T
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ment Store Makati, SM D
Makati, SM Megamall, SM B
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Super youth

Tim Yap

AFTER a long week of daily events, shoots and parties, I was craving for a nice, quiet and intimate dinner for two or three somewhere away from the urban jungles of Makati.

So I decided to head over to the Fort (it's technically in Taguig, ya know).

I walked past Pier One, which even from the outside seemed full of partyphiles craving for their fill of *pulutan*. I walked faster, doing a quick calorie count of how much inches *sisig* would add to my waist (okay, I'm just being OA).

There was also a midnight bazaar set up in the middle of the plaza, but the fluorescent lighting was scary (the vampire in me). So I headed toward another direction.

I then saw myself falling in line for Gonuts Donuts. But that wasn't in the original plan, and I got guilty because amid all the yummy donuts and other treats around the area, a big sign was displayed right above me: Fitness First.

In the mood for Chinese chow but not willing to wait in line for a table, I skipped Zong (heard the food is really goood there) and headed to Trio, where my famished friends were waiting for me.

Charity event hop

Trio is known to have the best pizzas in this Italian-crazy city of ours, so my friends (who are all Atkins advocates) bid the late doctor goodbye and proceeded to dig in the dough.

"I feel so good. I was kinda sluggish earlier, but this pizza just erased all that," said **Celine** the carb hater. If we were at Nuvo and she saw me mouthing a piece of bread, she'd be the first one to reprimand a friend veering away from the "no-carb" code.

But hey, we were at the Fort, so no one really cared (I eat everything, really, except hardcore vegetables) and we finished the pizza faster than you could say South Beach Diet.

Talking about Trio, it was here where I first had my meeting with Hands On Manila, for INQUIRER's super successful volunteer charity event held a couple of weeks ago.

Right after the Trio dinner, I was off to attend another charity event at the Tent. This was for Lingkod ER, an organization that supports indigent emergency room patients who can't afford the rising cost of health care.

"It started way back 1996 as a student organization by young college students from UP Manila, and it just grew from there," said Dr. **Mark Platon**, one of its founding members.

"The medical and nursing students help by volunteering their time in manpower-lacking emergency rooms and through the foundation's patient assistance program. We also do medical missions and conduct training in Emergency Care for adopted barangays," added **Alvin Peñalosa**, the event's organizer.

The Tent was packed. The foundation had hired the services of the Professional Models Association of the Philippines for free, booked a handful of popular bands, tied up with media organizations for coverage, got good sponsors and sold a lot of tickets. Voila! The Tent was brimming with partyphiles rocking for charity.

Everyone can be a VIP

I spoke to some doctor friends of mine outside the venue (What? Doctors who party? Oh, you'll be surprised) and they said they all went there to support the foundation. They got all dressed up (not in white) and made sure they bought the tickets (I think the VIP tickets sold for more than a thousand bucks per pop). And even though they weren't into rock music, they made sure they were counted in support of their chosen charity.

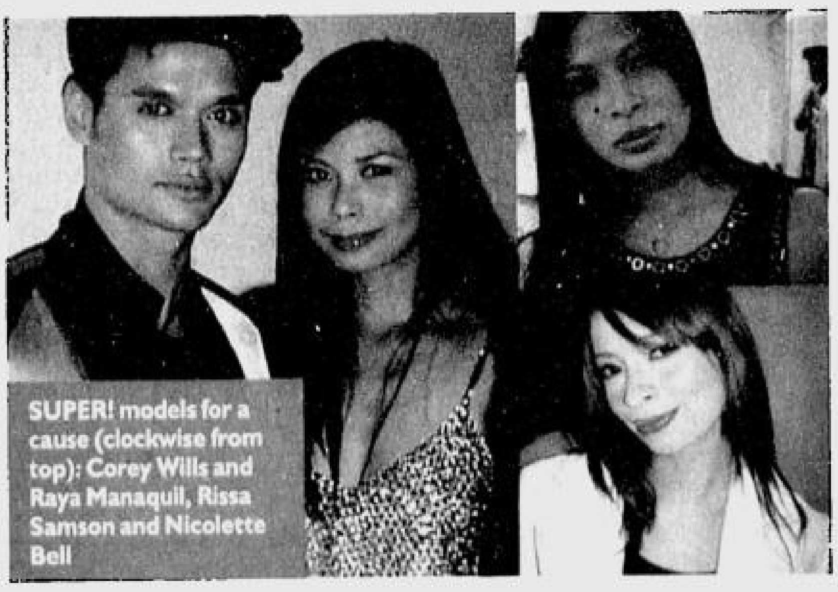
I find it really amazing that it's so normal for young people these days to fully support their causes. Way back, the charity events were always *kawawa*-looking happenings—always desperate for funding and exposure.

Now, the young people behind these fund-raisers go all out without spending so much. Innovation and creativity plus a great deal of volunteerism go a long way for these youth charities. Even at the VIP (Volunteer in Person) day at the Tent where young people bid for volunteer time instead of the usual cash, they didn't have second thoughts about giving their time for charity.

So who said youth is wasted on the young? Yes, everybody can be a VIP.

I totally disagree with the villain in "The Incredibles" when he said, "If everyone becomes super, then no one will be." With so many young people giving their time selflessly, volunteering for and believing in a cause and going all out in support of it, I think we are all "supers" in our own right.

Up, up and away!



SUPER! models for a cause (clockwise from top): Corey Wills and Raya Manaquil, Rissa Samson and Nicolette Bell

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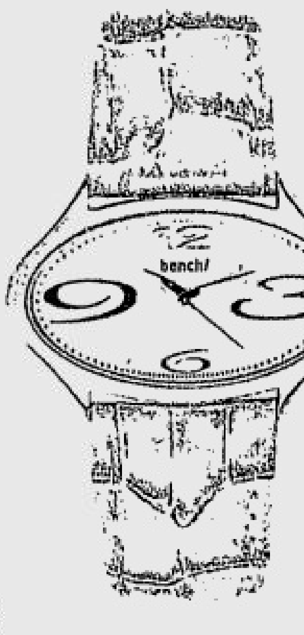

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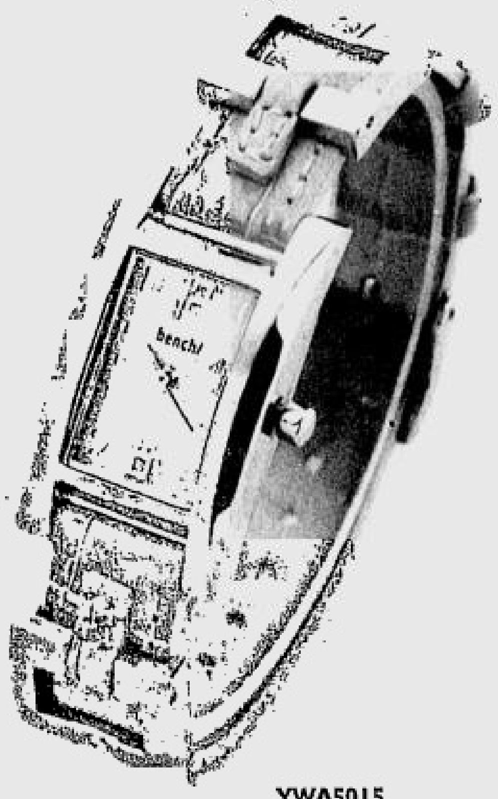

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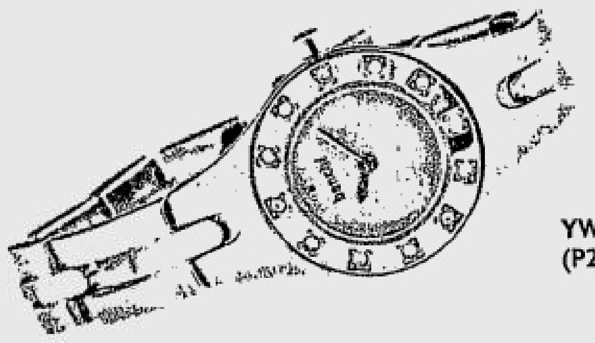

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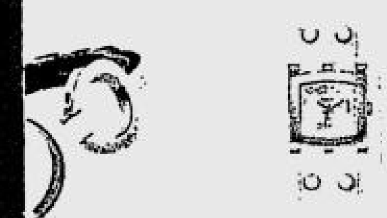

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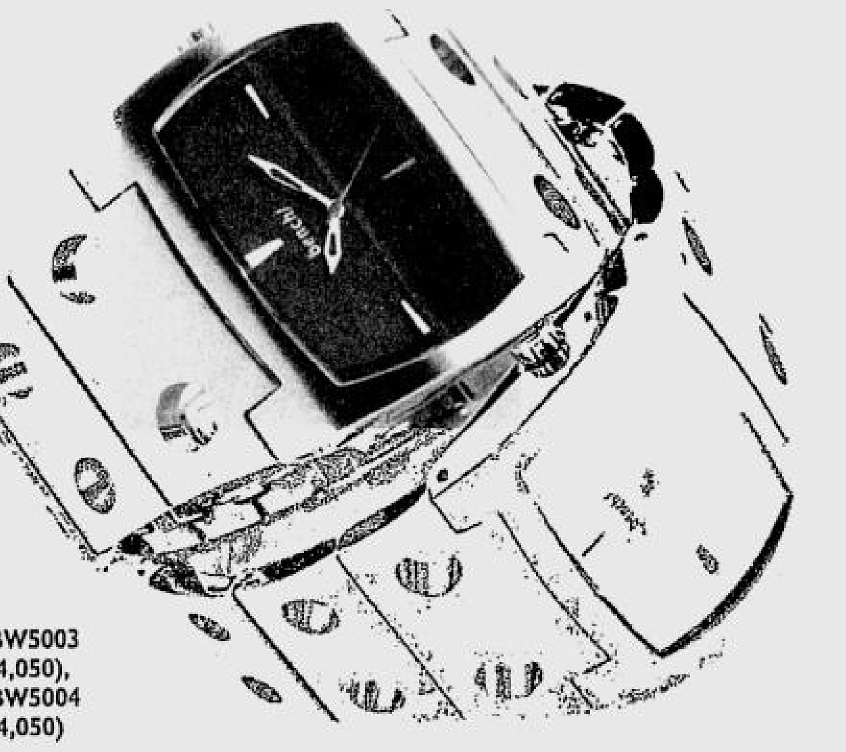

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- Other in-store promotions in the form of **discounts and freebies** at SM affiliate stores as well as many participating shops, hotels and restaurants beyond SM premises.

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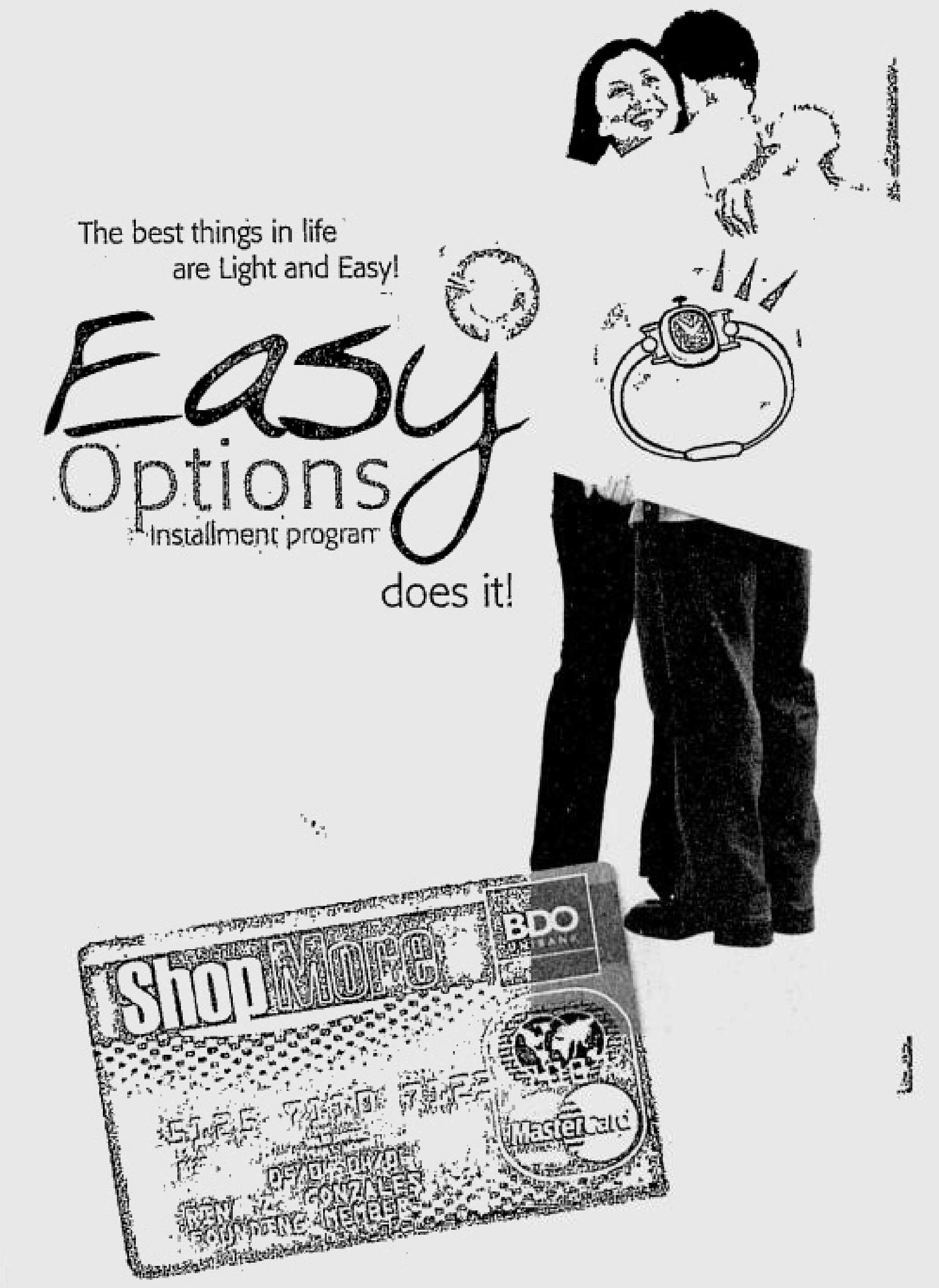

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Help create the world's biggest photo mosaic!

EARLY this year, thousands of people puckered their lips and helped the country bag the Guinness World Record for the most number of couples kissing simultaneously.

This time, Close-Up gives you another chance to become part of a world record. In January next year, Close-Up will attempt to break the record for the Largest Photo Mosaic. And because it'll be using 200,000 pictures to achieve that, it needs your photos.

2bU! decided to join in on the excitement by helping Close-Up collect your fab photos. We want you to send us photos of your "great mouth moments." It can be funny, silly photos of you, your friends and your family.

To thank you for your efforts, the entries that will qualify will automatically be included in Close-Up's Largest Mosaic.

Eight weekly winners will also be chosen starting today until Jan. 7, 2005. Weekly winners will bring home a gift pack from Close-up, a Canon Pixma IP1000 Printer and a pair of Converse Chuck Taylors or Converse Gift Certificates worth P2,000.

At the end of the promo, 2bU! will choose a grand prize winner from eight weekly winners and that lucky reader will get a Canon Powershot A400 digital camera and P5,000 worth of gift certificates from Converse.

The mosaic will be unveiled nationwide on Jan. 29, 2005 and Close-Up will tell you exactly where your picture is located. All qualified entries received within the promo period will also be automatically entered in the Close-Up Whattamouth raffle draws where you can win great prizes like camera phones and P100,000. The grand prize winner will win P1,000,000.

There's no reason not to join. A camera—or even a million pesos—is just a snapshot away.

How to join:

1. In an envelope, enclose a photo of your great mouth moment (at least a 3x5 colored photo); proof of purchase (of five New Close-Up sachets (any flavor)/two New Close-Up 25-ml cartons (any flavor)/one New Close-Up 50-ml, 100-ml or 150-ml carton; your personal details—your name, address, contact numbers, age and signature
2. Outside the envelope, write: 2bU! Whattamouth! Promo/ Your name, address and signature
3. Send entries to 2bU!, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City 1200.

Would you trust a non-doctor with your skin problems?

Good medical advice and treatment are important in maintaining your health and well-being. Therefore, you always see a trusted doctor when you need to. So why would you go to a cosmetologist or a beautician when you have a skin problem?

Many so-called facial care clinics, skin care centers and salons now offer dermatological procedures and treatments for various skin disorders. When you go to such a facility, you want to be sure it is staffed by professionals who are properly trained to handle skin problems. The establishment may be manned only by cosmetologists and beauticians with a background in simple beautification procedures, not dermatology.

Cosmetology *per se* is good; in fact, it serves the needs of many beauty-conscious individuals. But it's wrong to mislead people into thinking that establishments offering only cosmetology are at par with full-fledged dermatology clinics.

There are significant differences between dermatology and cosmetology:

- The continuous training required to practice dermatology is not necessary for cosmetology.
- Dermatologists adhere to hygienic medical standards as a matter of procedure.
- All equipment in dermatological clinics is maintained under sanitary conditions, whereas in cosmetology, tools may be reused.
- Dermatological treatments are tailored to individual needs, whereas in cosmetology the same procedures are performed for a range of customers.
- Products used by professional dermatologists are medically proven, thus these are safe and effective for the skin.
- The services of a dermatological clinic are more personalized and customized for each individual, compared to those of a beauty salon.

Skin problems are medical conditions, and are best handled by dermatologists, physicians who have taken specialized training in diagnosing and treating skin disorders. The skin is not just a cosmetic canvas. It is the biggest organ of the body, and needs to function well to be beautiful and healthy. Some people have the impression that anyone wearing a white coat is qualified to treat skin conditions. Allowing a non-doctor to handle even the simplest skin disorder can lead to a recurrence of the problem; or worse, it could result to infections, scarring and even disfigurement. **Only dermatologists can provide treatment that results in truly beautiful and healthy skin.**

As the country's largest and fastest-growing chain of dermatology centers, Dermclinic offers proper skin diagnosis and cellular-level treatment by expert dermatologists. But unlike other dermatology clinics, Dermclinic branches are conveniently located in malls. Dermclinic doctors are also always "in," so no appointments are needed. And at Dermclinic, clients are always "out-patients." No hospital confinement is needed.

Dermclinic is a true skin and hair clinic with full-time, licensed medical specialists and highly-trained clinic personnel. It boasts state-of-the-art equipment and facilities and the latest scientific breakthrough procedures to ensure the best aesthetic results possible. By offering the most advanced dermatological treatments designed to provide patients with safe and effective therapies for skin, hair and nail care, Dermclinic promises problem-free, beautiful skin for you to show the world.

To know more about Dermclinic's advanced, safe and effective treatments and services, please call the Dermclinic Hotline at 818-6477.

Are You In The Hands Of A Real Dermatologist?

Other facial care clinics/salons may leave you scared, anxious and uncertain. At Dermclinic, you are assured that all facial treatments are performed by real dermatologists.

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Horror or chick flick?

Now SHOWING

'Seed of Chucky'

KILLER doll Chucky (Brad Dourif) and his bride Tiffany (Jennifer Tilly) have a son named Glen (Billy Boyd), who resurrects his parents, not knowing how evil they are. The three then become a family of rampaging, psychopathic dolls.

"Seed of Chucky" is rated R in the US "for violence, gore, sexual content and language." Curiously, it is also classified as "horror/comedy."

Positive online reviews describe it as a "ridiculously whacked-out good time of a gore-fest." One recommends it "for the toothsome Jennifer Tilly, the manic Billy Boyd, some inventive deaths... and one frankly hilarious scene involving Tilly and a decapitated corpse. Another says it's "one of the best chop-slop comedies since 'Army of Darkness.'"

Those were positive, okay?

Negative reviews include this one from The Hollywood Reporter: "Suffers from creaky direction, a tatty story line, and—even worse, considering the genre—a lack of suspense and shocks."

The New York Times says Don Mancini, "who wrote and directed this idiocy, must hope that there are plenty of undemanding moviegoers out there."

San Francisco Chronicle has 'two words about it: "Falls flat."

But the best ones are the mixed reviews. Chicago Sun-Times, for instance, says "Seed of Chucky" is actually "two movies—one wretched, the other funny."

Los Angeles Citybeat is just a little kinder: "Needless to say, none of this is intended to be taken seriously."

And Metro Weekly in Washington D.C. decided not to mince words: "There comes a time when toys should be put away for good. Chucky passed that time long ago."

ODD COUPLE. Pensive bride Jennifer Tilly and her killer "groom"

'Bridget Jones: The Edge Of Reason'

IN THIS follow-up to the worldwide hit, we find Bridget (Renée Zellweger) where we left her: blissful and besotted in the arms of gorgeous lawyer Mark Darcy (Colin Firth). Mark is accomplished, supportive and tolerant of (nearly) all of Bridget's tiny jealousies. Why wouldn't every woman in London, including Mark's new long-legged, drop-dead gorgeous, I-always-say-the-right-thing-at-all-times intern, want to lure him away from the plumpish, opinionated, sometimes inappropriate Bridget? With the entry of the leggy threat, Bridget's pink clouds begin to turn grey. And just when it seems that the waters couldn't get any more choppy, Bridget's former boss, womanizing heartthrob Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant) sails into view.

Chicago Sun-Times' venerable Roger Ebert poses a question: "You ever have the kind of friend where for a long time you shake your head in admiration and then gradually realize you're shaking your head in despair? Bridget Jones would be a

HORROR/A2

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Horror or chick flick?

From page 1

friend like that." Whereas in the original movie, things happened to Bridget, he says, here Bridget happens to things. All in all, he was pleased. "At the end of the day, I left hoping there will be a Bridget 3."

Boston Globe's Wesley Morris thinks "Edge of Reason" actually "lacks reason (but) Zellweger proves resourceful."

Chicago Tribune's Allison Benedikt is not impressed at all. "(It) only rises above the schlock when it recalls the charisma of Bridget Jones' Diary," she says.

Viewers have posted mixed reviews online:

"Just saw the film and I have to say that it is better than the first one."

"A recycled effort that's not as great as the first."

"Bridget's gone chick flick."

Chick flick, eh?

A viewer who reviewed it from a strictly male point of view agrees: "Girls will enjoy, while males will mostly sit in frustration that this one is not like the other, or as good for that matter." He had an eye for the children, too. "Parents, don't bring your kids, for there be much swearing."

MIXED reviews for Bridget Jones sequel

LAUGHS are scarce, but performances are "warm and earnest"

'Christmas With the Kranks'

"CHRISTMAS With the Kranks" is better than its predecessors, the dreadful "Surviving Christmas" and the bloated "The Polar Express." Yet the movie, adapted from John Grisham's short novel "Skipping Christmas," still is one that's best skipped.

Warm and earnest performances by Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis make it a bit more tolerable and, at times, almost cheery. But laughs are scarce, and the tinsel-thin story plays out like two separate one-note jokes.

The movie's title presumably was changed from "Skipping Christmas" to avoid confusion with Ben Affleck's "Surviving Christmas," which had been slotted to open a few weeks earlier. The clunky choice of "Christmas With the Kranks" was appropriate considering how humdrum the movie turned out.

A few jokes click, but producer-screenwriter Chris Columbus and filmmaker Joe Roth—the Revolution Studios boss who occasionally gets his hands dirty by directing a movie—rely on repetitive jokes that weren't terribly funny the first time. *AP*

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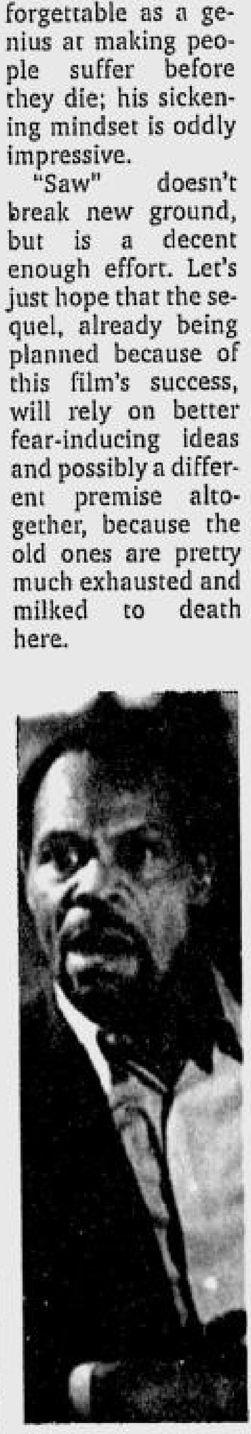
Not for the squeamish

From page 4

nightmarish symbols: the small, creepy clown marionette, and a mystery figure in a pig mask. They're nothing frightening or incredibly unique, but they add an extra flavor of monster mishmash to the deal.

The bad guy is unforgettable as a genius at making people suffer before they die; his sickening mindset is oddly impressive.

"Saw" doesn't break new ground, but is a decent enough effort. Let's just hope that the sequel, already being planned because of this film's success, will rely on better fear-inducing ideas and possibly a different premise altogether, because the old ones are pretty much exhausted and milked to death here.


GLOVER a surprise

Legends, neophytes in 'Unsilent Night'

SHOW TIME

THIS year's much-anticipated edition of the NU Rock Awards, interestingly called "The Unsilent Night" and set at the World Trade Center tomorrow, gathers veterans and neophytes alike.

The list of nominees for 2004 consists of both familiar and excitingly new names. Bamboo Mañalac (formerly of RiverMaya) figures prominently in the honor roll, with at least nine major entries for his band Bamboo, including Song of the Year for "Noypi," and Album of the Year for "As the Music Plays." He is competing for the Band/Artist of the Year honor against his former group mates in RiverMaya.

Performers enlisted

Also in the running for Song of the Year is the '80s band The Dawn, with "Harapin and Liwanag." But fresh talents Orange & Lemons, 6 Cyclemind, and Cambio are also gunning for Song of the Year and Album of the Year, aside from Best New Artist.

For Vocalist of the Year, familiar names Marc Abaya of Sandwich, Karl Roy of Kapatid, and Mañalac share the roster with newcomers Gabby Alipe of Urbandub and Ebe Dancel of Sugarfree.

Among the performers booked for the evening are 6 Cyclemind, Cambio, Chicosci, Ciudad, Kitchie Nadal, The Dawn, Tropical Depression (with Pepe Smith and Jr Kilar), Sugarfree, Bamboo, RiverMaya, Slapshock, Kjwan, and Sandwich.

The NU 107 crew has also whipped up something innovative for the show. "Gates will open at 5 p.m.," says Francis Reyes, who hosts the Sunday night top-rater "In the Raw" and is a member of The Dawn. "To start things rolling, we will have a pre-show, a foreplay if you will."

Lined up for the pre-show are The Late Isabel, Stonefree, Matilda, Plane Divides the Sky, and Nuncyspungen.

"It's going to be very exciting," Cris Hermosisima, network operations head, says of this year's awards.

"Every year, rock musicians look forward to not just watching and winning, but also performing at the NU Rock Awards," says jock and Imago member Zach Lucero. "When bands are given a spot number at the Rock Awards, they make it a point to present something different. They each have their own gimmick for the night. It's like they're making a statement."

Hall of Fame

A much-awaited announcement is this year's recipient of the Hall of Fame honors. "We can only reveal it on the awards night itself," Cris says with a sly smile.

Previous Hall of Fame winners include Pepe Smith, Jingle Chord Book, Wally Gonzalez, and Eraserheads.

The relatively young band Eraserheads was last year's Hall of Fame awardee. "They were pioneers," declares Patricia "Trish" Cabral, who anchors "The First Show."

"They were very influential," Cris concurs. "In the mid '90s, everyone wanted to sound like the E-Heads."

"From an industry standpoint, they proved that it could be profitable and viable to sign up rock bands," Francis states. "They made people realize that rock music did exist in the Philippines. Plus, they wrote really good songs."

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3 PA SIYAM
12:30 pm 2:30 pm 4:30 pm 6:30 pm 8:40 pm

4 SEED OF CHUCKY
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GP

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R-13

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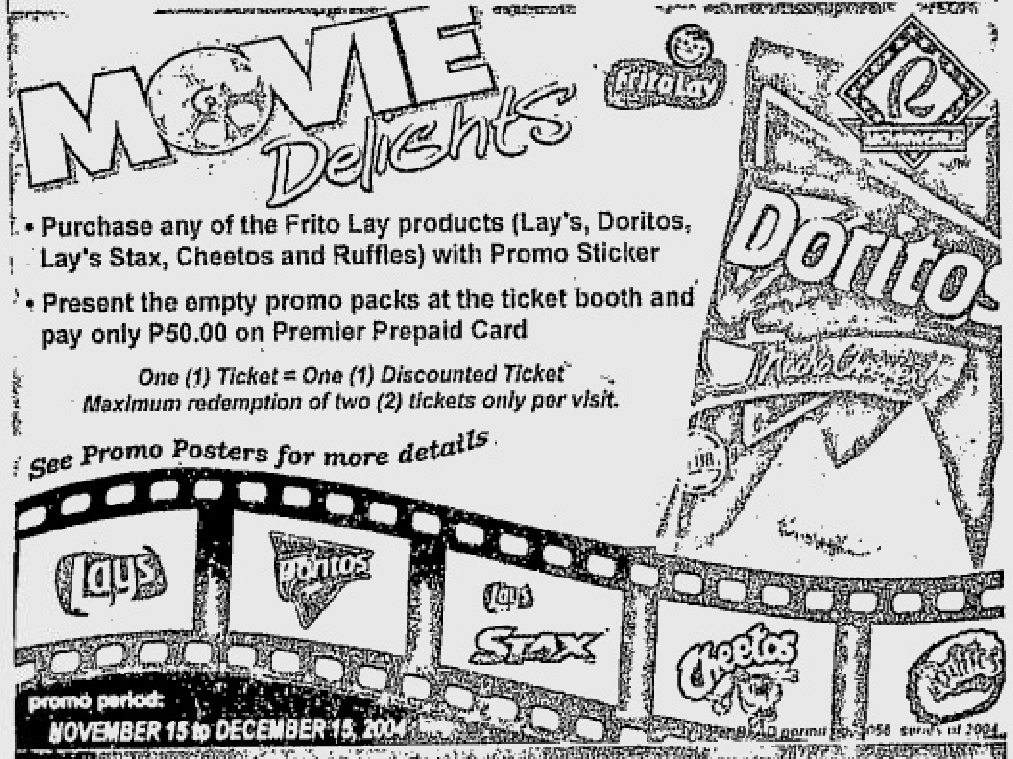

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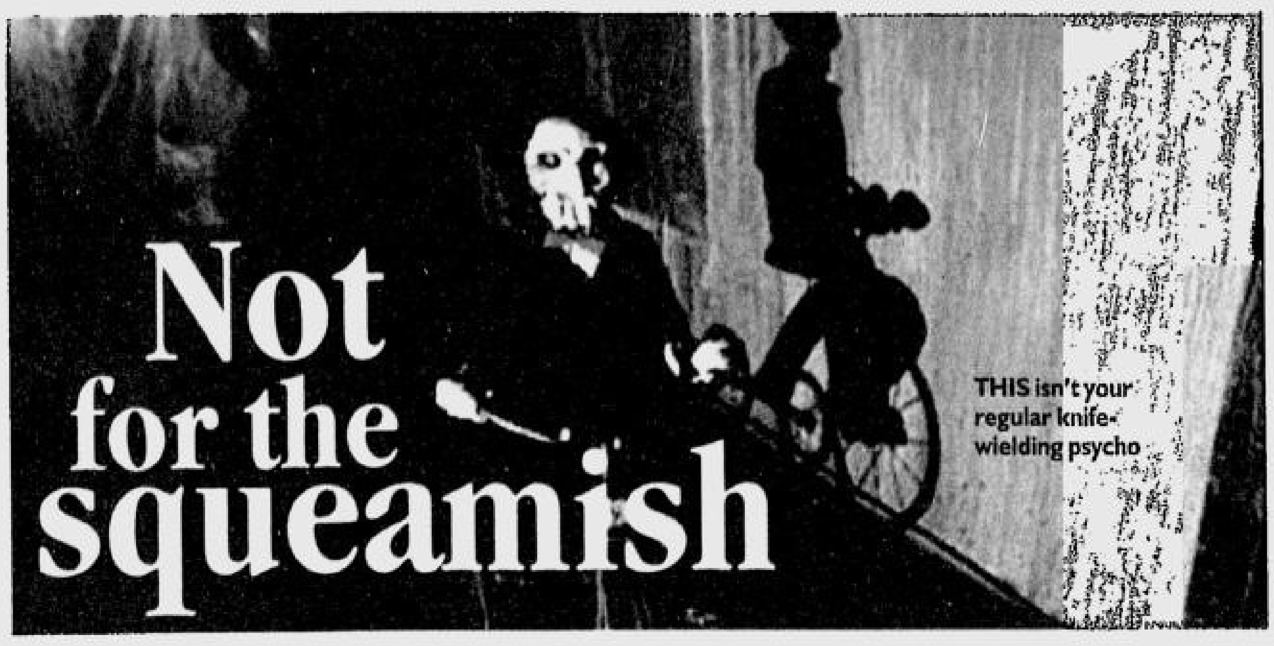


Not for the squeamish

THIS isn't your regular knife-wielding psycho

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

GOOD horror movie villains are often the ones who score with the most memorable dastardly deeds, if not the best rationale for their deranged behavior.

Whether it's Hannibal Lecter showing off his culinary touch, or the talky sniper playing elaborate mind games in "Phone Booth," these characters leave their victims as macabre calling cards. Thus, the most creative cinematic murderers, no doubt, are also the most morbidly fascinating.

REVIEW

In the new gore-fest "Saw," we are served a scenario that only deeply disturbed individuals—or, in this case, two very imaginative storytellers—can whip up. Director James Wan and co-writer and actor Leigh Whannell, both 27-year-olds, present a story focusing on two strangers, mostly set in a room where they are held captive by a masked madman dubbed by puzzled cops as "The Jigsaw Killer."

This isn't just any regular knife-wielding psycho. He carefully picks his victims and places them in situations where they do terrible things to themselves—or to others, so that they may save themselves from violent deaths.

Insane puppeteer

Jigsaw's latest twisted game involves two men he abducted, who wake up to find their ankles chained to opposite sides of a decrepit restroom.

Dr. Lawrence Gordon (a chunky Cary Elwes) and Adam (Whannell) are shocked that they share the room with a man who has apparently committed suicide. The dead man is holding a gun and a cassette recorder.

They listen to a message left on the recorder by their tormentor, who gives the doctor an ultimatum: Kill the other man in eight hours, or his wife and daughter will suffer the consequences.

But Lawrence and Adam are given a means to escape. They discover a pair of saws that aren't sturdy enough to cut through their heavy-duty chains, but are more than capable of slicing through their ankles. And, throughout the drama, the insane puppeteer is gleefully watching through his hidden camera—sinisterly smiling, just waiting for things to get really messy.

"Saw" overrides the limits of a low budget by casting some relatively unknown—or, at best, not-so-big—film and TV actors. Elwes, who has appeared in "The Crush," "Bram Stoker's Dracula" and the "X-Files" series, tackles his role with a range of conflicted emotions. He works effectively as a foil to former entertainment reporter Whannell, who makes a decent acting debut here.

In your face

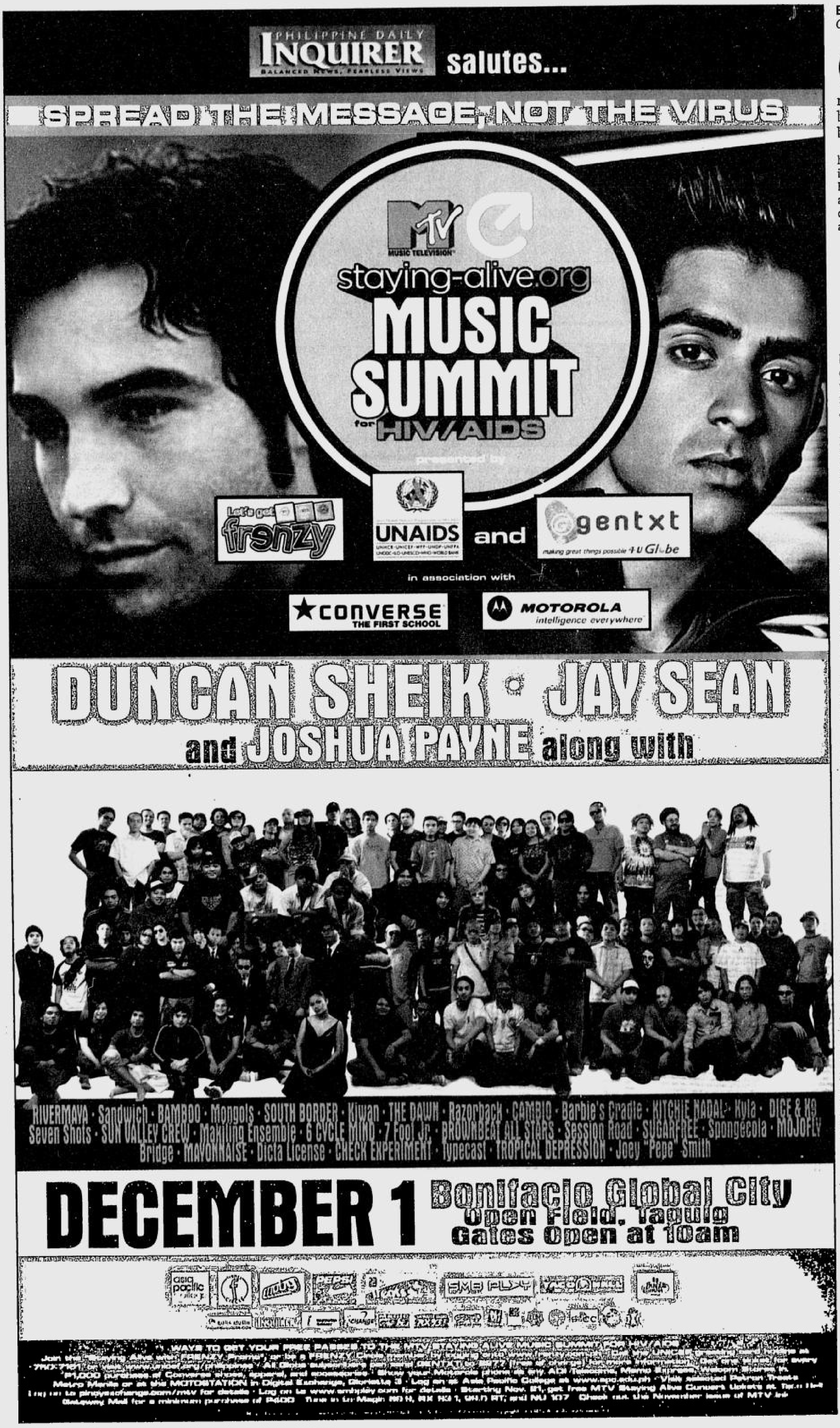
But there are some instances when the oft-clunky dialogue makes both actors and Danny Glover (who plays, surprise, a no-nonsense cop) look and sound simply cheesy. It's easy to guess what they're going to say next, and how they're going to say it.

Story-wise, Wan and Whannell have created a tale whose strength lies in excessively gritty visuals and good pacing. The director has a solid grasp of how to make the familiar plot intense enough with technical tricks and in-your-face shock tactics. The movie blatantly appeals to viewers' dismal train-wreck mentality—it's unfortunate, but you can't take your eyes off of it.

You want to know what happens next as a series of ably intercut scenes weave dilemmas within dilemmas. The twists and turns are delivered in a satisfactory manner but, ultimately, the focus on gore can get quite numbing. For the sake of the squeamish, I'd rather not elaborate.

Still, "Saw" is compelling. It is "Breakfast Club" meets "Seven" meets "Scream," and this freakish permutation has two

NOT FOR/2



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